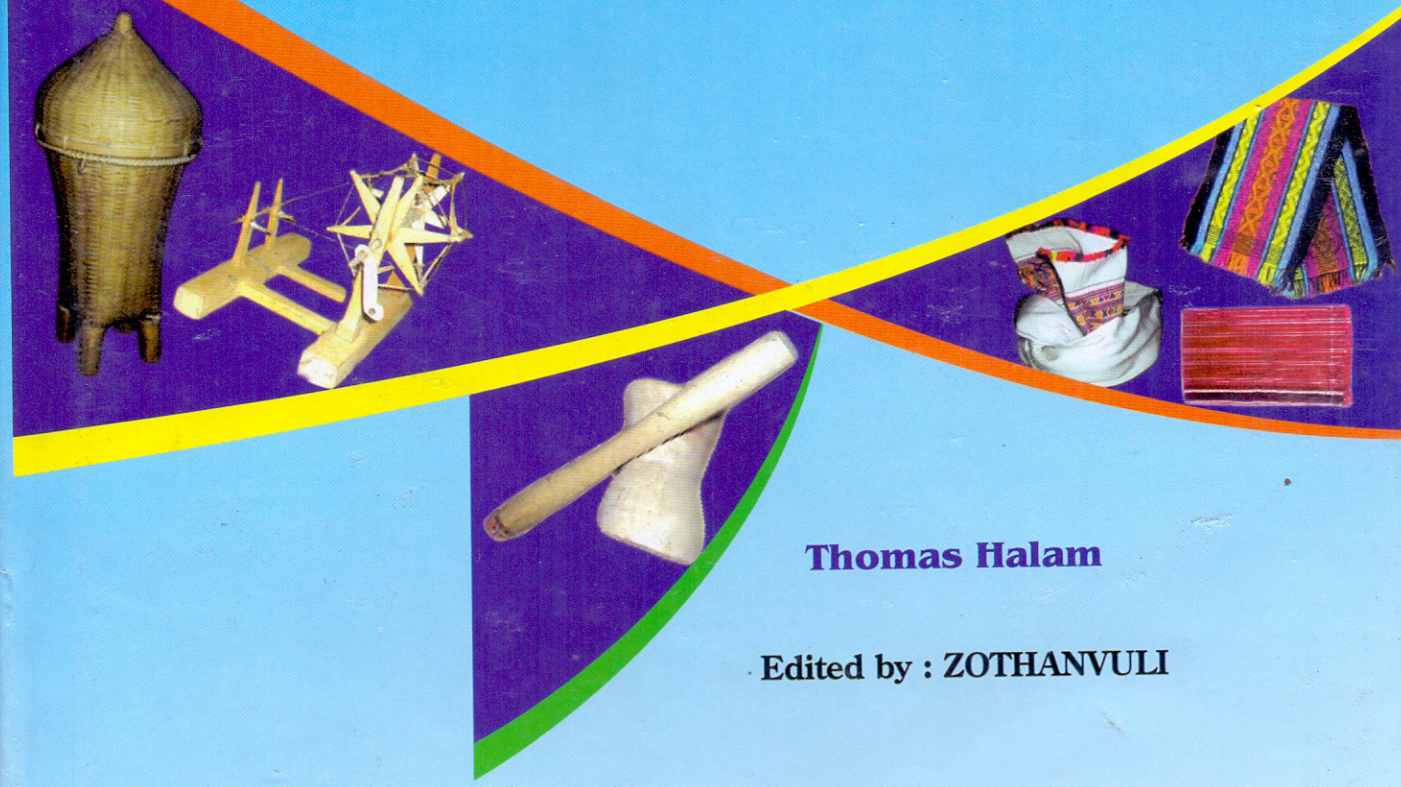
KHURPUITABUM

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF RANGLONG



Thomas Halam

Edited by : ZOTHANVULI

Tribal Research & Cultural Institute
Government of Tripura
Agartala

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Published by: Tribal Research & Cultural Institute
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1st Edition: 2014

Printed by :
New Quick Print,
11, J.B. Road, Agartala.

Price: 187.00

Copy right :
Tribal Research & Cultural Institute
Govt. of Tripura, Agartala.

PREFACE

Nowadays many scholars, educationists and historians are dealing with the history of almost all the major tribal communities of this region studying their origin, socio-economic life and religious beliefs. As a result, many books are published which offer us a wealth of informations on the various ethnic groups . Apart from these major ethnic groups, there are also so many small ethnic groups of Mongolian racial origin. The Ranglong people are also one of such small ethnic group living in Tripura, Assam and Mizoram. No any anthropological research documents or any historical documents of the Ranglongs, with exception to very few books of the recent past written by outsiders, were found. With the scarcity of reliable written records about the history of the Ranglongs to date, and the legends, traditions, culture, history and literature being preserved only by oral means, make research on this culture still rather difficult. As such the fact, the society has not been very much known to others. The rich legacy and traditions which were passed down through the centuries by elderly people is becoming inaccessible due to the slowly missing of the aged among the Ranglong Tribes. These calls for urgency to record the valuable account least these people are left without culture. So to meet the demand from the society, inspite of my limitation of knowledge, I made an attempt to write the story of the Ranglong with the title of "Khurpuitabum." I have no hesitation to admit that the writing of a history is not as easy as it appears to be. At first I wrote the Khurpuitabum in Halam language which was first published in the year 2001. However, in due course of time, I discovered that I must do much more than I had published the book in Halam language. As a result, I made up my mind to shoulder the task of translation and now painstakingly the book has been developed from Halam to English version. The book has been thoroughly revised and enlarged by adding new informations whatever necessary. I have added more informations to this book which I could gather from different sources so that the history of the Ranglongs may emerge as a veritable treasure to be cherished and preserved for generations to come. My prime objective is to see that the Khurpuitabum helps the people to know more about the origin of the Ranglongs and early history of migration, the historical development, socio-economic life, religious belief and the smooth transition from old traditional life to the present situation.

I hope that the book will be of help to those people who hunts information relating to tribal ways of life, cultural values and belief system, customary law and justice, traditional, political and social organization effective relationship. The book will be of use not only to the present generation but more so to the future Ranglong generations, for many of their

customs and traditions will be merely a tale of the past by them. I do not claim any originality of my own nor any new inventions or discoveries in this work. I have just simply narrated and presented the information received from the informants and books I used as source of informations. In fact, many portions of the books are taken from those books and arranged suitably without spoiling the effectiveness of their original value. In no way within the limited pages of this book can it be claimed to be exhaustive about the entire rich culture of the Ranglongs. However, I have attempted to briefly view most areas of the indigenous accounts of the Ranglong socio-culture.

I am fortunate that in the preparation of this book I enjoyed the help and counsel of a large number of very competent persons. I have received generous and ungrudging help, untiring co-operation, advice and guidance from senior citizens of the Ranglong society without whose selfless support the book could not attain its completion stage. I must acknowledge my indebtedness to them not only as a mark of formality and courtesy but also as a genuine expression of my gratitude. I express my special gratitude to Sri Sailohnuna, Director, Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura for considering my request and publishing the book.

Credit also goes to Sri Abinoy Halam, IAS, Chief Executive Officer, TTAADC and Sri K.N. Debbarma, IAS, Director, Kokborok & Other Minority Languages for their valuable encouragement and moral support which is much needed for the completion of the entire work. I have also to acknowledge gratefulness to Mr. Antiarbum Ranglong, Assistant Professor of Michael Madhusudan Dutta College, Sabroom for giving me valuable assistance for the betterment of this book. I owe deep gratitude to the authors of the books that I used as source of informations for my work and listed in the Bibliography. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not record my appreciation to my wife Munpuikhim Halam whose constant encouragement, co-operation and patience was instrumental in accomplishing this project. It gives me great pleasure to place the Khurpuitabum in the hands of the esteemed readers and all well wishers.

Constructive comments, suggestions and corrections from any corner towards the improvement of the book are fervently solicited. I have no hesitation to admit that inspite of my best efforts, there may be omission and commissions which may be kindly viewed with consideration. I shall consider my labour is rewarded if anybody is benefited by it.

Thomas Halam

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CHAPTER I

TRIPURA AND HER PEOPLE

Tripura is a tiny state located in the north eastern part of India. It is bounded by the international boundary of about 839 kilometers with Bangladesh on the north west, south east and west . It has geographical contiguity with the rest of India only by means of a common border of about 53 kilometers with Assam in the northern side, and a common border of about 109 kilometers with Mizoram in the eastern side. The whole area of the state is only 10,491.69 square kilometers. Geographically the state lies between 22^{0} $56^{/}$ minute and $24^{0}32^{/}$ north latitudes and $91^{0}10^{/}$ and $92^{0}20^{/}$ minute east longitudes. The marginal length of the state from north to south is 184 kilometers, and the marginal width from east to west is 113 kilometers.[1]

THE EARLY HISTORY OF TRIPURA

Prior to its accession to the Indian Union, Tripura is an independent kingdom ruled by hereditary kingship. It is stated in the Rajmala that the ruling dynasty of Tripura is one of the oldest one in India, and it belongs to the lunar dynasty. Tripura had its own era. It is three years ahead of the Bengali era and was introduced in 590 A.D.[2] The Rajmala gives us a long list of the kings who ruled Tripura in the past. 179 successive kings ruled Tripura for thirteen hundred years before its accession to the Indian Union. Druhya was the founder of the dynasty and Kirit Bikram Kishore was the last king of Tripura. How the name "Tripura" came into existence is highly a matter of controversy and speculation. The origin of the name of Tripura is uncertain. Scholars expressed their views in varied ways. Some say that it is originated from Tripura Sundari, the reigning deity of the land. Others hold the view that it is originated from Tripur, a powerful king whose name was recorded in the Royal Chronicle Rajmala. Another view is that the name came from Tipra, a totem which was worshipped as a kind of god. Some researchers think that the word Tripura is a nominal compound formed by the combination of two separate nouns, Tui (water) and Pra (estuary). The conjoining of these two words comes to mean the wide lower part or mouth of a river into which the sea enters at High Tide. However nothing can be said definitely owing to the absence of systematic historical records. The British Government allowed the state to be called "Independent Tippera" at the initial stage of their contact with the rulers of Tripura. But from 1866 onward they referred to it as "Hill Tippera".[3] Again, from 1920 they termed it "Tripura", pure and simple.[4] The state was never ruled directly by the British. They appointed W.B. Power as the first Political Agent for Tripura on 3rd July, 1871.[5] He was posted at Agartala. The appointment of Political Agent was made with a view to safe-

guarding the interests of the British Government. Maharaja Bir Bikram died on 17th May, 1947 at 08:40pm. [6] After the death of Maharaja Bir Bikram his minor son Kirit Bikram became his successor as Maharaja of Tripura. On the recommendation of the Crown Representative, a "Council of Regency" was formed to run the administration on behalf of the minor ruler and of which Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi was President. However, abrogating this Council of Regency Maharani took full royal power in her hand as a "Sole Regent" of the state by a proclamation of the January, 1948.[7]

TRIPURA MERGED WITH INDIA

On 15th October, 1949, the state of Tripura acceded to the Dominion of India following the "Tripura Merger Agreement" which was signed by Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi on 9th September, 1949. Since then the princely state ruled by the royal family of the Dev Varman tribes for over thousand years became a part of Indian Union and it has been administered by a Chief Commissioner till the first General Election. Ranjit Kumar Roy was the first Chief Commissioner of Tripura. After the first General Election, 3 Advisers were appointed to help and advise the Chief Commissioner in his day to day functions. Thereafter, the Tripura Territorial Council consisted of 30 members was formed in 1956 under the Territorial Council Act, 1956 as a step towards popular participation in a democratic Government. Besides these 30 members, 2 members were nominated by the Government in order to minister to the minority and backward communities not already represented in the council. With the introduction of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, the Tripura Territorial Council was elevated to the Union Territory on 1st July 1963, and Sachindra Lal Singha became the first Chief Minister. The momentous occasion came on 21st January, 1972 when Tripura became a full-fledged state with 60 Members of Legislative Assembly of the Indian Union. With the attainment of statehood the people of Tripura were naturally jubilant. For they thought that their highest aspirations were going to be realized and the local leaders also felt confident of success in their mission of building up a richer and happier Tripura. Braja Kumar Nehru was the first Governor of Tripura.

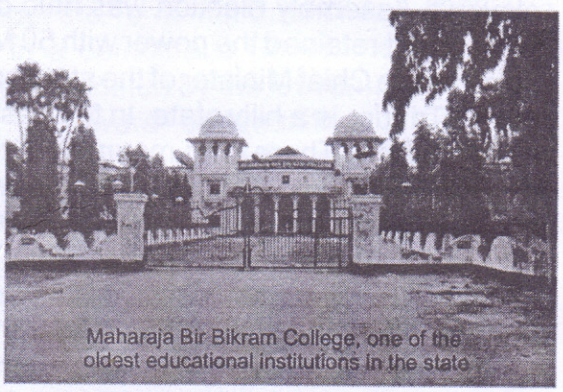
In the month of March 1972, after attainment of statehood, the first election of the Tripura Legislative Assembly was held in which Congress came into power with 42 MLAs and Sukhumoy Sengupta became the Chief Minister of the state. Assembly Election was held again in 1977 in which CFD – CPIM Coalition Government headed by Prafulla Das was formed on 1st April, 1977. However, the Government was shortly replaced by the next Janata – CPIM Coalition Government headed by Radhika Ranjan Gupta on 26th July, 1977. But the Government was dissolved on 5th November 1977 and the president rule was imposed in the sate. The next Assembly election was held again on 31st December, 1977 in which the Left – Front came into

power with 56 MLAs. Under the Chief Minister ship of Nripen Chakraborty, the first ever Left – Front Government was formed in the state on 5th January, 1978. In the Assembly election held on 5th January, 1983 the Left – Front came back into power with 39 MLAs and Nripen Chakraborty retained the Chief Ministership of the state. The Congress –TUJS Coalition Government came into power with 32 MLAs in the Assembly election held on 2nd February, 1988, and Sudhir Ranjan Majumdar became the Chief Minister of the state on 5th February, 1988. However, in the last part of the ministry, Samir Barman became the next Chief Minister of the state. The Left – Front came back into power with 49 MLAs in the Assembly election held on 3rd April, 1993. Dasarat Deb, the veteran communist leader among the tribal community, took an oath on 10th April, 1993 and formed the Left – Front Government in the state.[8] Dasarat Deb was the first tribal leader to become the Chief Minister of the state. In the Assembly election of 1998 the Left – Front retained the power with 40 MLAs and Manik Sarkar became the Chief Minister. In the Assembly elections of 2003 and 2008 the Left – Front retained the power with 41 MLAs and 49 MLAs respectively and Manik Sarkar remained as the Chief Minister of the state consecutively. The eleventh Assembly election was held on 14th February, 2013 in which the Left – Front retained the power with 50 MLAs and Manik Sarkar assumed the office as the Chief Minister of the state on 6th March, 2013.

Tripura is a hilly state. In the past it is called "Hill Tippera" because of its hilly terrain. There is no mountain in the state. Six principles range of hills namely Deptamura, Baramura, Atharamura, Longtarai, Sakhan and Jampui, the average distant between two ranges is twelve miles or eighteen kilometers. The altitudes of these hill ranges vary from 50 to 3,000 feet above sea level. Batlingchhip of the Jampui range is the highest peak of about 939 meters. Tripura is a charming land with long beautiful ridges of green hills, valuable forests and wide valleys washed by fountain-streams and flowing rivers. The entire hilly areas of Tripura have attracted the various indigenous tribal people for sheltering area, food gathering and hunting ground. When T.E. Coxhead, the political agent of the British undertook the second census of Tripura during 1876 – 1877, it was found that the total population was 91,759. Among them 36,035 people resided in the plain areas and the rest 55,724 people lived in the hilly areas. The census report ventilated that the indigenous tribal people had to live in the hilly areas from the early days due to the availability of land for their shifting cultivation. There is no navigable river in Tripura. The Principal rivers are the Gomati, the Howrah, the Khowai, The Dhalai, the Manu, the Deo, the Juri, the Feni and the Muhuri. During the rainy season, however, boats of small size can ply up and down those rivers. There are also some valleys which constitute the plains of Tripura. The valleys are the Gomati valley, the Khowai valley, the Dhalai valley, the Manu valley and the Longai valley.

THE PEOPLE OF TRIPURA

It is generally believed that the indigenous tribal people dominated the state in the past. At present, the Bengalees and the Tribal people constitute the two major ethnic groups in Tripura, making bulk of the population. From the early period, the Bengali people used to come from the neighbouring areas and districts of Bengal now constitute the most predominant community in the population of Tripura. It is said that the rulers of Tripura encouraged the influx of the Bengali people mainly out of two considerations. The first and foremost was to increase the revenue of the state by giving land rights to persons settling in Tripura. Secondly, the rulers of Tripura highly valued cultural contact with the Bengalees. But the sudden and unprecedented influx of refugees from the then East Pakistan ever since the partition of India had been threatening the very economy of the state. This influx of the people extensively increased and ultimately outnumbered the tribal population in Tripura. At present, as many as 19 tribal communities are identified as Scheduled Tribes in the state. Of these, four tribes are having population less than 500 in the 1981 Census. The nineteen tribes are: **Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Chakma, Halam, Noatia, Mog, Lushai, Uchai, Kuki, Garo, Munda, Orang, Santal, Khasia, Bhil, Chaimal, Bhutia and Lepcha.** Of the tribal population the Tripuris or Tipras formed the largest single group. The ruling family belongs to this tribe. They have their own dialect which is known as "Kokborok". It is the mother tongue of the majority of tribes. It had no written alphabet. It follows the Bengali script.



Maharaja Bir Bikram College, one of the oldest educational institutions in the state

END NOTES

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CHAPTER II

THE HALAM COMMUNITY

THE HALAM PEOPLE

Ethnologically and linguistically the Halams belong to the Old Kuki Groups. It is very difficult to point out where they were originally inhabited in the past. Different scholars and writers suggest different theories abcut the migration of the Halam in Tripura. No any anthropological research documents were found about them. According to their own belief and tradition the Halams have come from a place called Khurpuitabum, a place supposed to be somewhere in south central China. They are also believed to have migrated from some place in the east or north east to Tripura, where they came in contact with the ruling dynasty of the day and accepted the suzerainty of the Kings of Tripura. They are known as Mila Kukis.[1] According to S.B.K. Dev Varman, the Kukis call them "Ranglong".[2] The Halams are said to have migrated from "Khurpuitabum", a place in the hills just to the north of Manipur.[3] The census report of 1340 T.E. also narrates that the Halams were originally the inhabitants of Khurpuitabum.[4] Some are of the opinion that the Halams are one of the earlier settlers in Tripura who are said to have lived in Tripura before the Tipra came to this land.[5] There is, however, no written evidences to substantiate this claim. It is said that those of the Kukis who submitted to the authority of the Tipra king and remained obedient came to be known as Halam.[6] There is no homogenous settlement of the Halam people. They are scattered over a vast area comprising of Western Mizoram, parts of North Cachar Hills and Barak Valley of Assam and Tripura. Some suggest that the word "Halam" means killer of human beings. [7] Perhaps the neighbouring people named them Halam as they were ferocious and killed strangers in olden days. The Lushais used to call the Ranglong as "Langrawng", which means looking ferocious. Dr. D.N. Goswami, in his book, *"The Korbong of Tripura"*, referred that in Halam language "Ha" means soil and "Lam" means owner. According to him, Halam means the "Owner of the soil or earth".[8] Here it seemed that the term "Halam" is interpreted wrongly. The word "Halam" does not have any meaning in Halam language. The word Halam was coined by others. In Tripuri language, "Ha" means earth, "Lam" means road, so it is road to earth or country. It is said that when they came in contact with the king of Tripura, the Maharaja had given them the title "Halam". From this definition it can be presumed that Halams were migrating to their present place of settlement through the earth road. The Halams were nomadic by nature and had the habit of changing frequently their place of living, migrating from one place to another particularly in search of fertile jhum

land. They are divided into several clans, some are more and some are less in number. There are as many as 19 tribal communities in Tripura. According to the census report of 2001, the total population of the Scheduled Tribe was 9, 93,426 including 47,245 Halams. Among the 19 major tribes in Tripura, Halam is one of the major tribes in terms of their numeric strength. In the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (Amendment) Act. 1976, Halam is placed at serial No. 6 in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Tripura. According to 2001 census, the Halams occupy the fifth position among the tribal communities of Tripura in terms of population. Due to long lapse of time and years, sometimes it may create confusion in our mind that different clans of the Halam community are of different tribes. But they are of the same tribe and having common origin. As was stated earlier, the original home of the Halam is Khurpuitabum. The Halams are said to be an industrious tribe.

HALAM LANGUAGE

The language spoken by all the families of the Halam community is known as Halam language. The Halam language is cognate with the Kuki–Chin group of the greater Tibeto-Burman family. The Halams are divided into various clans and each clan, living in a compact geographical area, has its own identity and tradition. Owing to the physiography of their land and habit, the dialectical differences among the Halam speaking people are only slight. To indicate the same object the sound produced by the twisting of tongue by different clans varies a little either more or less shorter or longer particularly in case of nasal sounds. Although they are largely influenced by other communities and accepted their dominance since long lapse of time and years but could maintain their own language and culture. In Tripura there has been a conscious effort by the Government of Tripura to promote and develop the Halam language. To this effect, the Government has constituted the Halam Language Advisory Committee to look into the matters relating to the Halam language. So far as literature is concerned, the Halams do not have script of their own. They borrowed from the Roman script for any documentation and writings. Generally the following letters are used for any documentation and writings of the Halam language:

A B CH D E F G H I J K L
M N O P R S T U V W Z

There are 23 alphabets in Halam language. Of these five are vowels – **A, E, I, O, U**, eighteen are consonants – **B, C,H, D, F, G ,H, J, K, L, M, N, P, R, S, T, V, W, Z.**

THE HALAM CLANS

The Halams are divided into several clans. There is a controversy in the number of clans of the Halam community. It is very difficult to mention that how many dafas and clans were in the past. Some times in census some clans were included or excluded. The Halams are originally divided into

twelve dafas known as the "Baro Halams" though later they appeared to have multiplied. In the course of time, the numbers were increased to thirteen, then sixteen and nineteen dafas. Of late, names of dialectical groups and clans are being used as surnames by the Molsom, the Kaipeng, the Bongcher, the Koloi and the Rupini. The census report of 1340 T.E. mentioned about eighteen dafas of the Halam community, and the total population was 12,054 only.[9] Each of these dafas are again divided into a number of clans, and each clan is further sub-divided into several lineages and families. The Halam community includes a number of families, among which are the following: **Ranglong, Molsom, Kaipeng, Rangkhol, Chorei, Bong, Morsephang, Dap, Saimar, Sakachep, Thangachep, Langkai, Bongcher, Nabeen, Korbong, Koloi and Rupini.** Of these, the Ranglongs, the Molsoms, the Kaipengs and the Choreis are comparatively major clans. George A. Grierson suggested that the Saimars were coming down from the Cachar Hills to the south and east of the Sadar Sub-Division in the plains since the census of 1891.[10] They were very poor population of 133 souls only. According to Rajmala the Halams are divided into thirteen dafas: **Ranglong, Molsom, Rangkhol, Koloi, Kaipeng, Rupini, Dap, Khulong, Chorei, Langkai, Bongcher, Morsephang and Korbong.**[11] Again in 1931 census, there are 18 dafas. They are **Ranglong, Molsom, Rangkhol, Korbong, Koloi, Kaipeng, Bakhulu, Koireng, Chorei, Dap, Thangachep, Sakachep, Saimar, Nabeen, Bongcher, Rupini and Langkai.**[11] Among them Ranglong, Bong, Korbong, Dap, Thangachep, Sakachep, Morsephang, Langkai, Chorei and Saimar used Halam as the surname. The Koloi and the Rupini are somehow different from the Halam people as their dialect is akin to the Kokborok speaking people, yet they are included in the Halam community.

A Halam man with traditional attire

CENSUS WISE POPULATION OF THE HALAM COMMUNITY

Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Population	1,644	16,298	19,076	28,969	36,499	47,245	57,210

It is observed that the decadal growth of the Halam population in the state is much slow. The most surprising fact is that, according to George A. Grierson during 1890-1900 AD the population of the Halam community was 26,848, [13] and 12,054 was the Halam population in the Census of 1340 T.E.

But in decade like 1951, the Halam population was much declined and stood 1,644 only.[14] The Halams are scattered all over the state mainly concentrated in the six districts such as South, Sepahijala, Gomati, Dhalai, Unokuti and North Tripura. They are also living in Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of Assam and on the north west of Mizoram. The Halams are known as "Khelma" in the states of Meghalaya and Nagaland. The literal meaning of Khelma is "outsider" in Kachari dialect. [15] As the subject is specifically concentrated on the Ranglong clan; it is thus discussed in details from chapter three.

MOLSOM CLAN

Molsom is one of the major clans of the Halam community. They are also referred to as "Morchhom" [16] or "Morchhum" [17] or "Mualthuam".[18] But they call themselves as "Molsom". The name Molsom derived from the words "Mol" meaning hillock and "Som" meaning ten, that is, the people of ten hillocks. [19] From the legendary lores and mythology it is said that the Molsoms were originated from "Lungsirkek"[20] which is exactly similar to the word Khurpuitabum. Some suggest that the Molsom, the Kaipeng and the Bongcher were supposed to be the first group of the Halam community to enter Tripura; they are in record during the reign of Raja Omar Manikya. They are now mainly concentrated in the Gomati, the Sepahijala and the Dhalai districts of the state. It is presumed that they entered in Hill Tippera in or around 1400 A.D. The Molsoms are given an idol made from Gooseberry tree which they called "Zobomthang". As far as the Molsom administrative set up is concerned, the courtship is consisted of the following members:

RAI → KANCHEKAU KALIM KABUR →

The different sub-clans of the Molsom are:

1. Achep
2. Dorai
3. Lengman Ronte
4. Lungthung
5. Mapu
6. Nokham
7. Nuampor
8. Ronte
9. Sangar
10. Sungphun
11. Tuisum
12. Uisa

KAIPENG CLAN

Kaipeng is also one of the clans of the Halam community. They represent one of the most primitive settlers of Tripura. It is said that the Kaipengs were originated from "Sialsu Vawmrang" which is believed to be

located somewhere in Myanmar or China.[21] Some suggest that they have migrated to Hill Tippera from Doapathar, an area close to the border between India and Myanmar.[22] They are now mainly concentrated in Gomati and Sepahijala districts of the state. The Kaipeng clan is segmented into as many as six sub-clans. The different sub-clans of the Kaipeng are:

1. Dourai
2. Kuarset
3. Lunthung
4. Sengkei
5. Senghor
6. Sunjang

KORBONG CLAN

The Korbongs are one of the smallest clans belonging to the greater Halam community. They are secantly populated. The census of 1340 T.E. shows their number was 38 only in which 19 were females. [23] The census of 1961 shows slightly better figure of 72 persons in which 48 were males and 24 were females.[24] In 1991, their population was comparatively better of 182 persons approximately.[25] The gradual increase from 1930 to 1990 shows that this clan is on the verge of extinction. The Korbongs are mainly concentrated the Champabari village under Jirania Block of the Sadar Sub-Division, the Khaiamongol village of Khowai Sub-Division and Purna Chandra Korbong Para of East RF of Khowai Sub-Division. It is very difficult to identify how this people came and when they came to Tripura. According to the statement of some elderly people of this clan, they came from Doapathar, an area close to the border between India and Burma. [26] It is said that the word "Korbong" is derived from "Kobong" which means pillow.[27]

BONG CLAN

The Bongs are also one of the negligible and little known clans of the Halam community. Like the Ranglongs, previously the Bongs were also residing in the Sylhet province of the present Bangladesh.[28] They could still remember the names of some places like Bhanughat and Samsernagar where they established their settlements. But due to the migratory nature, they left those places and moved forward in search of suitable land for jhum cultivation.

Thus, in the course of time, they had to reach their present homeland. Due to long lapse of time and years, sometimes it may create confusion in our mind that different clans of the Halam community are of different tribes. But they are of the same tribe and having common origin. As stated earlier that the original home of the Halam is Khurpuitabum. As such the fact, the Bongs also have many common similarities with the other clans of the greater Halam community. They are mainly found in the Dhalai district of the state.

BONGCHER CLAN

The Bongchers are one of the minor sub-tribes of the Halam community concentrating mainly in Gomati district of the state. They are also referred to as Bongshel or Bongshi.[29] According to them, Bongcher is the correct term what they are using as their surname. In Bongcher dialect, 'Bong' means to cut into parts and 'Cher' means to sprout.[30] It is very difficult to trace the historical origin of the Bongcher. The sketchy oral history handed down from generations is the only available sources. However, they claim that their original home is Sinlung.[31] The cultural background of the Bongchers can be said to be steadily declining. As far as the Bongcher administrative set up is concerned, the courtship consisted of the following members:

RAI→GALIM→GABUR→SENJA

The different sub-clans of the Bongcher are:

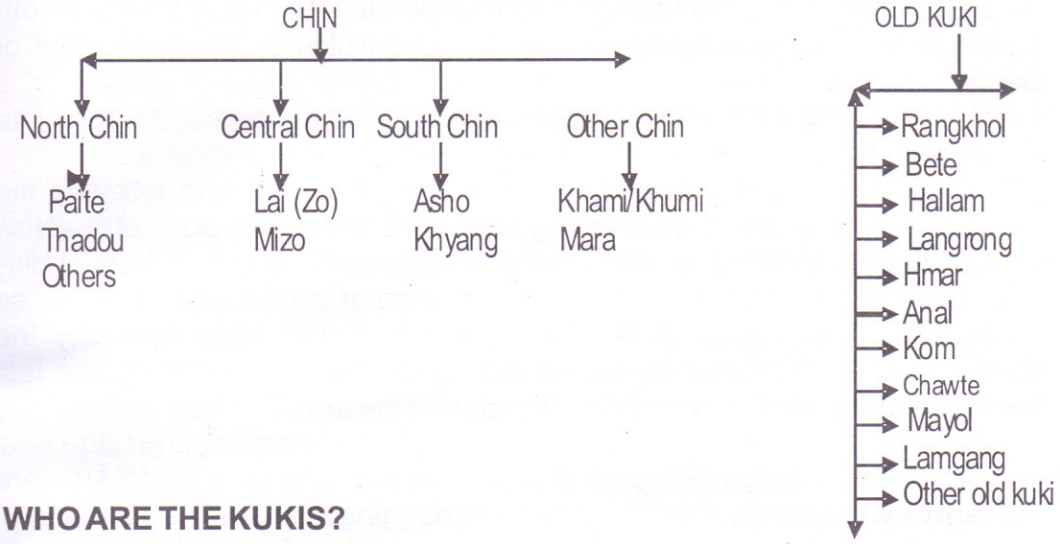
1. Bongpui
2. Chorai
3. Iryng
4. Ronte
5. Vatok

CHORAI CLAN

The Chorais are also one of the sub-tribes of the Halam community living mainly in North and Unakuti districts of the state. They are also living in the neighbouring states like Assam and Mizoram. Their origin has been traced to Khurpuitabum and another place called Mairingpuansen which was believed to be somewhere in China.[32] Dr. Vumson, the writer of Zo History, suggests that the Ranglongs and the Chorais are of the same parents.[33] In fact, there is no difference among them as reflected in their ways of life. There are different views on the origin of the term "Chorei". Some are of the opinion that since this community is small, they are called Chorei which is derived from the word "Cherei", meaning small in Kokborok language. Some are of the opinion that the term "Chorei" comes from a game played by them during their settlement at Khurpuitabum and another place called Mairingpuansen in central China. In this game a bamboo platform known as "Chomphang" was made on the hill slope, and axes known as rei were placed below the slope. Those who successfully jumped over the rei and chomphang within a stipulated time were the winners of this game. The term "Chorei" may be originated from this game because of the use of "chomphang" and "rei".[34] As far as the Chorei administrative set up is concerned, the courtship is consisted of the following members: **KALIM →KABUR→CHAPIA KALIM→ CHAPIA KABUR**

Illustration of Kuki-Chin Classification by David Bradley

TIBETO-BURMAN-NORTH EAST INDIA→KUKI-CHIN



WHO ARE THE KUKIS?

Various scholars broadly describe the Kukis are belonging to the Mongolian stock. The term "Kuki" is a Bengali word meaning "hill men" or "highlanders".[35] From the time of Warren Hastings, the Kuki had come to be regarded as a conglomeration of various tribes. As stated earlier, the term "Kuki" is an Assamese or Bengali term generally applied to denote the various hill tribes who inhabited the territory extends from the Naga Hills, Cachar, and East Sylhet in the north down into the Sandoway district of Burma in the south; from the Myittha river in the east, almost to the Bay of Bengal in the west.[36] It is almost entirely filled up by hills and mountain ridges, separated by deep valleys. These tribes were also found in the valley of Manipur and in small settlements in the Cachar plains and Sylhet. The "Kuki" name has been given to these tribes by their neighbours. The denomination of Kuki is a purely conventional, there is no indigenous name covering them all as a whole. The Kuki term is not employed by the tribes themselves, who use titles such as Ranglong, Rangkhol, Hmar, Biate, Thado and Jangshen and so on. It can be assumed that the Kuki name was given to these tribes because of their primitive culture. Generally the Kukis were of two groups known as the "Old Kukis" and the "New Kukis". According to George A. Grierson, the old Kukis were comprising **Rangkhol, Bete, Hallam, Langrong, Aimol, Chiru, Kolren, Kom, Cha, Mhar, Anal, Hiroi-Lamgang and Purum**.[37] Alexander Mackenzie stated in his book, "*The North – East Frontier of Bengal*" that the Kukis were of two groups as "Naia Kukis" and "Purana Kukis", and the Naia Kukis were sub-divided into the Thado, Changsen, Singshon, Holthang and Haokip clans, whereas the Purana Kukis consisted of the Rangkhol, Biete, Sakachep and Ranglong.[38] All these were mere dialects of one language,

which may be called by the customary name of Old Kuki. Since they were the tribes who first emigrated from their old seats in and about Lushai and Chin Hills into Cachar, the Ranglongs, the Rangkhols, the Biates and their off-shoots were generally recognized as the Old Kukis by the Assamese or Bengali people.

They were called Old Kuki because of their earlier appearance into the plain area.

The Thados, the Jangshens and their off-shoots who followed the migratory route of the earlier immigrants were usually spoken of as New Kukis. They were called so owing to the fact that they came from Lushai Hills and made their appearance into the plain area at a later date than the so called Old Kukis. Many of the so-called Old Kukis, more specially the Ranglongs who migrated to their present place of settlements in the last three centuries, at the present day abandoned the term Old Kuki and merged into the Halam community. According to the census report of 2001, the total population of the Kukis in Tripura is 11,674. In the early days the Kukis were nomadic by nature and had the habit of changing frequently their place of living, migrating from one place to another in search of fertile jhum land and for other reasons. The Kukis of Tripura are also known as Darlong. It is said that the "Darlong" word derived from "Darleng". In Darlong dialect "Dar" means shoulder and "leng" means to cut. As the Darlong and the Lushais were perpetually at feud in the past, and perhaps they would cut the Lushais with the help of their strong shoulder and they were so spoken of as "Darleng" which was later corrupted as Darlong.[39] There are several clans of the Kukis and are given here according to different records of several states of the north-east region. The words Kuki and Chin are synonymous and are both used for many of the hill tribes in question. Chin is a Burmese word used to denote the various hill tribes living in the country between Burma and the provinces of Assam and Bengal. They do not themselves recognize the name Chin, but call themselves *Yo* or *Zo* in the north, *Lai* in the centre, and *Sho* in the south, besides many other tribal names. The word *Chin* is supposed by some authorities to be a corruption of the Chinese "Jen", a man.[40]

1. **The Kukis in Tripura includes the following:**[41]
   (I) Baite (ii) Belalhut (iii) Chhalya (iv) Fua (v) Hajango (vi) Jangtei (vii) Khoreng (viii) Khephong (ix) Kuntei (x) Laifang (xi) Lentei (xii) Mizel (xiii) Namte (xiv) Paitu, Paite (xv) Rangchan (xvi) Rangkhol (xvii) Thangluya.

2. **The Kukis in Mizoram includes the following:**[42]
   (i)Beite, Biate (ii) Changsen (iii) Chongloi (iv) Doungel (v) Gamalhou (vi) Gangte (vii) Guite (viii) Hanneng (ix) Haokip or Haupit (x) Haolai

(xi) Hengma (xii) Hongsungh (xiii) Hrangkhwal or Rangkhol (xiv) Jongbe (xv) Khawchung (xvi) Khawathlang or Khothalong (xvii) Khelma (xviii) Kholhou (xix) Kipgen (xx) Kuki (xxi) Lengthlang (xxii) Lhangum (xxiii) Lhoujem (xxiv) Lhouvum (xxv) Lupheng (xxvi) Mangjel (xxvii) Misao (xxviii) Riang (xxix) Sarihem (xxx) Seinam (xxxi) Singson (xxxii) Sitlhou (xxxiii) Sukte (xxxiv) Thado (xxxv) Thangngeu (xxxvi) Urbuh (xxxvii) Vaiphei.

3. **The Kukis in Assam includes the following:**[43]
(i)Biate, Biete (ii) Changsan (iii) Chongloi (iv) Doungel (v) Gamalhou (vi) Gangte (vii) Guite (viii) Hanneng (ix) Haokip or Haupit (x) Haolai (xi) Hengna (xii) Hongsungh (xiii) Hrangkhawal or Rangkhol (xiv) Jongbe (xv) Khawchung (xvi) Khawathlang or Khothalong (Hmar) (xvii) Khelma (xviii) Kholhou (xix) Kipgen (xx) Kuki (xxi) Lengthlang (xxii) Lhangum (xxiii) Lhoujem (xxiv) Lhouvum (xxv) Lupheng (xxvi) Mangjel (xxvii) Misao (xxviii) Riang (xxix) Sairhem (xxx) Selnam (xxxi) Singson (xxxii) Sitlhou (xxxiii) Sukte (xxxiv) Thado (xxxv) Thangngeu (xxxvi) Uibuh (xxxvii) Vaiphei.

4. **The Kukis in Meghalaya includes the following:**[44]
(i)Biate, Biete (ii) Changsan (iii) Chongloi (iv) Doungel (v) Gamalhou (vi) Gangte (vii) Guite (viii) Hanneng (ix) Haokip or Haupit (x) Haolai (xi) Hengna (xii) Hangsing (xiii) Hrangkhawal or Rangkhol (xiv) Jongbe (xv) Khawchung (xvi) Khawthlang or Khothalong (xvii) Khelma (xviii) Kholhou (xix) Kipgen (xx) Kuki (xxi) Lengthlang (xxii) Lhangum (xxiii) Lhoujem (xxiv) Lhouvum (xxv) Lupheng (xxvi) Mangjel (xxvii) Misao (xxviii) Riang (xxix) Sairhem (xxx) Selnam (xxxi) Singson (xxxii) Sitlhou (xxxiii) Sukte (xxxiv) Thado (xxxv) Thangngeu (xxxvi) Uibuh (xxxvii) Vaiphei.

End Notes

1. Dev Varman, S.B.K.: *The Tribes of Tripura*, P.35
2. Ibid. : p.35
3. Ibid. : p.35
4. Devbarma, S.C. : *Census Bibarani*, 1340 T.E. p.90
5. Das Manoshi & Choudhury Jayanta : *Halam Tribes*, p.29
6. Roychoudhury, Nalini Rangjan : *Tripura Through the Ages*, p.91
7. Singh, K.S. : *People of India, Vol. V*, p.1243
8. Goswami, Dr. D.N. : *The Korbong of Tripura*, p. 34
9. Devbarma, S.C. : op.cit., p.90
10. Grierson, George A : *Languages of North-Eastern India, Vol.II*, p.557
11. Singha, K.C. (Ed) : *Rajmala*, p.129
12. Devbarma, S.C. : op.cit., p.90
13. Grierson, George A : op. cit. p.626

14. Das Manoshi & Choudhury Jayanta : op.cit., p.21
15. Rev. C.S. Rila: A Pastor of Noagang Pastorate told me the meaning of Khelma in Cachari dialect. His native place is Dolchhara in the district of Hailakandi in Assam.
16. Singha, K.C. (Ed) : op. cit., p. 129
17. Devbarma, S.C. : op. cit., p. 90
18. Liangkhaia Rev. : *Mizo Chanchin* , p. 4
19. Singh, K.S. : op.cit., p.1246
20. Kormo, Molsom: A Presbyterian Mission worker told me the original place of Molsom. His native place is Kulai Gantachhara in Dhalai district, Tripura.
21. Halam, Samuel : Contribution of the Baptist Church to the Halam Tribe – A Thesis submitted to The Senate of Serampore College(University) for the Degree of M.Th., p.19
22. Singh, K.S. : op.cit., p.1245
23. Devbarma, S.C. : op.cit., p.158
24. Goswami, Dr. D.N. : op. cit., p. 9
25. Ibid. : p. 9
26. Ibid. : p. 8
27. Ibid. : p. 8
28. Goswami, Dr. D.N. : *The Bongs of Tripura*, p. 24
29. Sailo, Sailiana IAS : *The Bongchers*, p.1
30. Ibid. : p.1
31. Ibid. : p.4
32. Chorai, Fonidhor : *The Choreis*, p.11
33. Lalrinawma H. : *Hmasang Zofate Chanchin*, p. 229
34. Chorai, Fonidhor : op. cit., p. 11
35. Grierson, George A : op. cit., p. 509
36. Ibid. : p. 509
37. Ibid. : p. 517
38. Mackenzie, Alexander : *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 83
39. *Tui* : A Journal on Tribal Life & Culture, p. 145
40. Grierson, George A : op. cit., p. 551
41. Haokip, P.S. : *Zalen-Gam*, p.14
42. Ibid. p. 13
43. Ibid. p. 15
44. Ibid. p. 16

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY HISTORY OF RANGLONG

Among the 19 tribes in Tripura, Halam is one of the major tribes occupying the fifth position in terms of their numeric strength.[1] The Halams are divided into several clans, some are more and some are less in number. Of these, the Ranglongs are one of the major clans of the Halam community living in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura. Due to long lapse of time and years, sometimes it may create confusion in our mind that the different clans of the Halam community are of different tribes. But they are of the same tribe having common identity and origin. Mythologically the Ranglongs are one of the tribes originated from Khurpuitabum. Racially and dialectically they belong to the Kuki-Chin group. More broadly, they belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of the Mongolian racial. As they were the first immigrants from their old seats in and about Lushai and Chin Hills, and made their earlier appearance into the plain areas, the plain people at one time called them old Kuki.[2] According to George A. Grierson the Ranglongs belonged to the old Kukis, while Alexander Mackenzie also grouped them in the Purana Kukis.[3] Perhaps the Ranglongs were one of the earliest tribes who came in contact with the Tippera king and accepted the suzerainty of the kings. The title "Halam" was given to them by the king, and under this name only they have generally been known to their neighbours since over the past years. As the reference point of their recognition, the Ranglongs used the title "Halam" as surname from the time of their migration to the present place of settlements in the last three centuries. As the matter of fact, Halam is their recognized collective name at the present day. S.B.K. Dev Varman suggests that the Kukis call the Halam as "Ranglong".[4] The following are the Halam people who used to trace their origin to the mythical Khurpuitabum: **Ranglong, Molsom, Kaipeng, Rangkhol, Chorei, Bong, Morsephang, Dap, Saimar, Sakachep, Thangachep, Langkai, Bongcher, Nabeen and Korbong.** They all are known as Halam. They are essentially of the Achep, the Chorei, the Langkai, the Morsephang and the Ranglong have amalgamated into inseparable tribe who lived together from the time immemorial. In fact, the Achep, the Bong, the Chorei, the Dap, the Langkai, the Morsephang, the Nabin and the Ranglong are so close in dialect, custom, tradition, dress etc. that no distinction can be made amongst them. It is very probable that all these tribes belong to the same parents. The Biates of Assam and Meghalaya and the Aimols of Manipur also are very close to the Ranglongs. Like their other Halam brethren, the Ranglong tribe is also segmented into as many as 21 sub-clans which are as follows: **Achep, Banmaher, Chorei, Dap, Daroa,**

Halam, Kajari, Khoplapu, Kamar, Khuangchom, Langkai, Morsephang, Rangkhol, Rupini, Sanghuipu, Tara, Tansurai, Tivol, Vangru, Vai and Zangtak. Although there was no caste division in the Ranglong society, Sanghuipu and Tansurai were the clans of priesthood called "Chuantai".

It is to be regretted that the ethnological term "Ranglong" is perhaps very often corrupted and recorded wrongly in different ways by different Scholars. In the Rajmala, the Ranglong is referred to in varied ways as "Langrong", "Mutilanglo" and "Rungrang".[5] It was recorded by George A. Grierson, while doing his linguistic survey during 1890 – 1900 , as "Langrong",[6] while S.B.K. Dev Varman referred to as "Langlung".[7] It was recorded as "Langlu" in the census report of 1340 T.E.[8] "Mutilanglo" was inscripted on the Chemlian, the big dao given by the king of Tripura on 1337 Tring, 14 Mag.[9] The elderly Mizo people also used to call the Ranglong as "Langrawng", which means looking ferocious. It was most probably that the Thados called the Ranglong as "Langrong" in the past, owing to the fact that the Thados had no "R" sound in their dialect.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie referred in his book, "*The North – East Frontier of Bengal*", the term Ranglong to as "Lamkron" or "Langlom".[10]

Whatever may be the term in regard to Ranglong coined by the people outside the Ranglong society who came in contact with them, "Ranglong" is the correct ethnological term used by themselves. However, there is no way to throw any blame to any one for corruption or wrongly used of the term "Ranglong" as no written literature about this small tribe was found, and henceforth all were gone through hearsay or myth.

WHERE IS KHURPUITABUM?

It has been generally believed that Khurpuitabum was the original home of the Ranglong. Now it is the question that has often faced everyone that where would be the location of the Khurpuitabum. The elder members of the Ranglong community used to point out that their ancestors came out from a cave called Khurpuitabum. However, they could not mention clearly where this cave was located. As the matter of fact, while tracing the original home of the Ranglong now settled in Tripura, Assam and Mizoram, there has been nothing found other than Khurpuitabum, their mythical original home. They used to explain the origin of the different clans of the Ranglong by the legend that they were coming out from a big cave of the earth called "Khurpuitabum" one after one. It is said that the mouth of the cave was guarded by the deity of the hawk so that no one could come out from that cave. Of the many clans the Vangru first came out and soon had to fight with the deity of the hawk. Meanwhile the rest of the clans took advantage and got out from the Khurpuitabum and climbed up on the elephant. The Vangru clan had to climb up on the elephant at last after he defeated the deity of the hawk, and owing to that reason today the Vangru clan is said to be the youngest among the many of the Ranglong clans. Interestingly this mythical Khurpuitabum is

current in almost all the folktales of the Kuki-Chin and other Zo tribes. But due to the linguistical difference, the ways of interpretations are not the same. Different tribes have different versions of an almost similar story regarding their origin. The legends of the different Kuki tribes of Manipur including Aimol, Anal, Chiru, Kom, Maring, Tarao, Simte and Koireng also traced their origin to "Khul".[11] The Lushais and Hmar also said the same thing that came out from"Chhinlung"[12] and"Sinlung"[13] respectively. It is not out of place here to mention that originally the Ranglongs have the same ancestral stock with different Kuki-Chin tribes. S.B.K. Dev Varman referred in his book title, "*The Tribes of Tripura*", that in Kuki language, "Khur" means source and "Pui" means river. "Ta" stands for from. [14] Here it seemed that the term "Pui" is interpreted wrongly. The river is called "Va dung" or "Lui" in Kuki language. As such the matter of fact, the term "Khurpuitabum" may be substantially interpreted as "Khur" means cave and "Pui" means big, "Ta" stands for from and the word "Bum"[15] derived from the Kachin language which means Hill. In their pristine times their forefathers had no cloth to wear and house or shelter to live in. And, they usually took shelter in a cave and some big rocks. From this standpoint, therefore, it can be presumed that they regarded themselves as coming out from a big cave called Khurpuitabum.

In fact, according to hear say or myth the Khurpuitabum was nothing other than a cave. The exact location of Khurpuitabum could not be ascertained yet it is firmly surmised that it might be somewhere in China. Different scholars and writers expressed different views about Khurpuitabum in varied ways:

1. One interpretation is that as the descendant of the King of China, they claimed themselves as "Sinlung khuk", which mean they originated from China. As such, this mythical cave is believed to be located somewhere in China.[16]

2. Some interpret that the Great Wall of China was believed to be Khurpuitabum. So, when they came out of that wall, they narrated themselves as coming out from a big cave. Great Wall of China was built in 23 BC. It is 20–30 feet in height and 15–20 feet in width.[17]

3. S.B.K. Dev Varman suggests that Khurpuitabum is located in the hills just to the north of Manipur.[18]

4. Yet, another interpretation says that, there was a time, when their forefathers do not have cloth to wear and house or shelter to live in. They usually took shelter in a cave and under some big rocks. From this standpoint, they regard themselves as coming out from a big cave called Khurpuitabum.

Which interpretations would have more credibility is yet to be understood through research. However, one can assume that human being is special creation of God. So, it is hard to believe that the Ranglong tribe could be originated from a big cave.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

It is said that the Mongolian race were originated from the valley of the confluence of the rivers Yangtze and Huangho in China. But in consequence of the raids of the Chinese people from Yunan Province, they scattered from that valley. Some groups took western direction and entered Burma through Tibet. Thus, it is presumed that the Ranglongs also included among those who entered Burma; as they were also offshoot of the Mongoloid racial stock. From the legendary lore it is presumed that after they had scattered from Khurpuitabum, the Ranglongs and other Kuki-Chin tribes moved westward where they happened to come across a good number of hills and rivers and then they reached the Tibet. From the Tibet they entered into Burma. It is generally believed that the Chin Hills was at one time the home of the Kuki-Chin tribes. At any rate, the Chin Hills was an old seat of the Ranglong. Perhaps the Ranglongs were happened to come in contact with the Kachin tribe first in Burma who inhabited the great tract of country including the upper waters of the Chindwin and of the Irrawaddy, which lies to the east of Assam, and to the north, north-east, and north-west of the more settled parts of upper Burma. Traditionally; the Ranglongs used to say "Kachin Ulian"[19] to show respect towards their superior. It can be surmised that due to the greater population of the Kachin tribe, the Ranglong would probably have used this word to extend social respect to their superior Kachin tribe. Another name for Kachin is "Chingpaw" in Burma, and "Singpho" in Assam.The Ranglongs then settled down to somewhere in the low land area of Chindwin valley in Burma, which they called it "Durnai Phai" which means "Durnai valley". They usually used to narrate the past story of their settlement at Durnai valley by saying–

"Nei omna Durnai phai, Tangte raza'n zu nek kar, Durnai khua khat zunri"

MEANING

"Durnai valley is our dwelling place, When Tangte raja offered drinks, and the people of Durnai valley were drunk".

As was stated earlier that the area of the Chindwin valley where they made settlement was low, they were always faced with problems of flood, and hence they abandoned the idea of longer settlement in the area of Chindwin valley.[20] As the nature did not favour them to live at Chindwin valley, then they had to move out in search of a secure place somewhere in the hill range of Thantang. But after some years of their settlement in that hill range,

they deserted the area and moved towards the west and settled in another hill range of Letha.

They named this hill range as "Lentang", and from Lentang the word "Lenpur" is derivated, which means "world". When they were in the Chin Hills, it is said that **Relsi** was the most affluent person among them. They used to explain the richness of Relsi by saying – "*Simnin ei hong lal, Relsi vai bung*", which means he was so rich that even the rising sun had to pay respect to his corn of paddy. His wife Chonvangi bore him a daughter named Sasomchun who later got married with Khomalailuapui.

Interestingly the story of Relsi is current in the folktales of the Mizos, but due to the linguistical difference, they used to call him Lersia. It is not out of place to mention here that there are some tribes still living in the Chin Hills whose cultures and traditions are so similar with that of the Ranglongs. Traditionally the Ranglong names are of the combination of three syllables. The same traditional way of the Ranglong is practiced by those tribes of the Chin Hills in the case of naming the newborn child. **Sonkholian, Paukhanthang and Paudonang** are such names of the Chin Hills which are similar with the names of the Ranglongs.[21] From this stand point of view, it can be presumed that at one time the Ranglongs were living in the Chin Hills of Myanmar, earlier known as Burma. At any rate, the Chin Hills must be said as the old seat of the Ranglong tribe as they belonged to the Kuki-Chin group. It could not be ascertain how long and when the Ranglong tribe entered and occupied the different places of Chin Hills of Burma, however it could be at least said that the period of occupation of the Chin Hills was before the advancement of a more powerful people from the unexplored country. George A. Grierson stated that the old Kukis like the Ranglongs, the Rangkhols, the Betes and their off-shoots were driven from the Chin Hills by the different aggressive clans like the Thados, the Jangshens and their co-tribes.[22] Then they yielded to and were forced to the north and west to enter the rugged Lushai Hills of the present Mizoram. The main migration to the north was indirectly due to the pressure exercised by the Lushais. These pressed the Thados from the south, who in their turn pressed the old Kukis like the Ranglongs, the Rangkhols, the Bietes and their co-tribes into the Lushai Hills. It cannot be said the exact date when they entered the Lushai Hills due to so long lapse of time and years. Some were of the opinion that the Lushais moved into the Lushai Hills in between the year 1700 – 1800.[23] However, it is presumed that the first appearance of the Ranglongs in the Lushai Hills would be some time during 1000 – 1200 A.D., and the Lushais moved into the Hills in about the year 1700 – 1800. The Thados and the Jangshens who were an intermediate one between the Ranglongs and the Lushais entered the Lushai Hills just a little earlier than the Lushais. It is evident from their folktales and folksongs that the Ranglong people once passed through Mizoram on their way to reach their present land. A good

number of researches had revealed the early historical foot-prints of the Ranglongs in the Lushai Hills. The name of a hill range "Hachhek" comes from Ranglong word "Hachek", "Ha" means "teeth" and "Chek" means "white".[24] It is said that while the Ranglongs lived in this hill range, they suffered from a great famine and caused to death from famished. They happened to find dead bodies with white teeth lying everywhere. So they called the range as "Hachek Rungtang", meaning the hill range of white teeth. It is said that the villages like Kawrthah, Rengdil and Hriphaw are also coined by the Ranglongs in their own dialect.[25] Some more villages like Kolasip, Champhai and Lunglei are also mostly related to their folktales. They call "Lily Champhai zol", "Lunglei varkoi" for Champhai and Lunglei respectively. However, in Lushai Hills also, the Ranglongs were not secured from the attack by other aggressive clans like the Thados, the Jangshens and their co-tribes. During that time people were worried because life was so insecured due to perpetual feud among the various tribes. The Lushai and Chin Hills were full of inter-village feuds, raids and ambush-cades. Owing to the irresistible pressure exercised by the Lushais from the south, then the Thados and the Jangshens who were intermediate one between the Ranglongs and the Lushais who entered the Lushai Hills, had to abandon the Lushai Hills and followed the migratory route of the tribes whom they had dispossessed.

For fear of a more aggressive tribes, it is generally believed that the Ranglongs left the Lushai Hills in and around the year 1200 – 1500, while the Thados and their co-tribes were gradually expelled from the Lushai Hills and settled down in Cachar somewhere between 1840 – 1850.[26] In course of time, the Ranglongs entered into the northern part of Manipur where they founded their head-quarters at Ruanglevaisua, the place where the Tiruang and Tivai rivers met together. Ruanglevaisua is popularly known as Tipaimuk.

THE WORD RANGLONG: IT'S DERIVATION

Like many other tribes, the Ranglongs are also a river dwelling tribe which signifies that they are originally plain tribes, residing in river valleys, not the hills. The Barak river is still known as "Tiruang dung" by the Ranglongs, and they regard themselves as to be the children of this river. "Tiruang" stands for Barak and "Dung" stands for river. They thought that the deity of Tiruang river is the most powerful and supreme than that of those they have else. They used to worship this river once in every four or five years of interval by offering animals. It has been generally believed that the most probable account of the term "Ranglong" also comes from the name of the Tiruang dung itself. The word "Rang" is coined from "Ruang", and the word "long" means river in Khyang dialect, so from "Ruanglong" to 'Ranglong' term is hence coined. It is worth mentioning that the Dimasas were also called "Sons of River" [27] as the word "Di" means river, "ma" means great and "sa" means son, which mean the son of the great river. Unfortunately, as was stated earlier, it seemed that the term "Ranglong" has been recorded by different writers in different ways

which led the word in corruption. Whatever is the term in regard to Ranglong coined by the people outside the Ranglong society who came in contact with them, but "Ranglong" is the correct ethnological term used by themselves. Ruanglevaisua, popularly known as Tipaimuk, may be considered as the place from where the language, culture, customs and traditions of the Ranglongs have developed. This is also the very place that made the Ranglongs to be the subjects of the king of Tripura. In the Rajmala, Dakshin is stated to have established a new kingdom in the Barak valley with his headquarters at Kholongma with his people of several of the Kukis like Langrongs [28] and their off shoots. Therefore, the Ranglongs were one of the earliest tribes who came in contact with the Tippera king. The Ranglongs discovered a new word "Maniapur", which is coined from the word Manipur only. The words "Maniapur" and "Lenpur" are synonymous and are both used for world. Another band of people of the same tribe also moved from Chin Hills towards the western direction and entered Tripura through Doapathar, an area close to the border between India and Burma and concentrated in south and west Tripura districts.[29] The band comprised of Molsom, Kaipeng and Bongcher who were supposed to be the first group of the Halam community to enter Tripura, they are in record during the reign of Raja Omar Manikya. It is presumed that they entered Hill Tippera in or around 1400 A.D. The name Molsom is derived from the words "mol" meaning hillock and "som" meaning ten, that is, the people of ten hillocks.[30] The Ranglongs are a migratory tribe, and they do not occupy their villages for more than two or three years at a time. They used to move on to a new place to another in search of good jhum land, and also to avoid the attacks of a more powerful people. Tradition has it that when the Ranglongs had inhabited the Ruanglevaisua, the father of Rongzeidon and chief of the Ranglongs named Buloplal Zangtak killed his household servant who belonged to the Marong tribe.[31] At this the whole community was totally alarmed, and finally due to this incident they had to abandon the Ruanglevaisua within a night for fear of the invasion by the Marong tribe. There is no doubt that the Ranglongs had deserted the Ruanglevaisua for fear of stronger and aggressive tribe of Marong.[32] They then scattered from there and moved forward in order to seek safety settlement. Some moved eastward and made their appearance in Manipur.

It is said that the Chirus and Anals are mentioned in the Manipur Chronicle as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, while the Aimols made their first appearance in Manipur in 1723.[33] The Ranglongs were on friendly terms with them and whose language and their own was practically same. Thus it can be said that they were of same clan living together at a certain time. Alexander Mackenzie stated that the immigration of four clans such as Khelma, Rangkhol, Biate and Ranglong took place in 1853 and

entered in north Cachar.[34] Some had followed the river route of Tiruang and, in the course of time, happened to reach the Syhlet province. Thus, the Ranglongs had left Manipur and reached to a new province. When they first reached Syhlet province, it is said that a certain Rupini landlord extended comradeship to them in their crucial situation.[35] As they entered the Syhlet province, with the help of the certain Rupini landlord, the Ranglongs founded a village called "Khopui" meaning big village in their own dialect. They concentrated the Khopui as their headquarters for a certain period, and thereafter they established several villages surrounding the Syhlet province like Baniachung Punji, Champabari, Huapa, Horma, Hatai, Kusai, Kolompa, Kukithol, Nolmanlam, Noldori, Oilam, Rupasora, Sagornal Punji, Sairazul, Solngui, Thirbungsip, etc. George A. Grierson stated that the settlement of Ranglong was noticed in the Sagornal Punji.[36] It would be seem that the Ranglongs settled in the Syhlet province in a nomadic state for some centuries. Owing to their migratory nature, the Ranglongs gradually moved on towards the south following the Langkai and Juri rivers. During that time ordinary jhum cultivation was their main occupation. As they could not produce food crops from the same land consecutively for many years and, consequently, they had to leave the place and search for new place for cultivation. Thus, in the course of time, they had to reach their present homeland.

THE RANGLONG VILLAGE

As the Ranglongs were a migratory tribe, they were always in the habit of changing village site. They did not occupy their villages for more than two or three years at a time. They used to move on to a new place to another in search of good jhum land, and also to avoid the attacks of a more powerful people. Other reasons may be attributed why a new village sprang up to fire or epidemic diseases. The newly established villages are often named after significance of the location, such as the abundance of certain plants or after names of prominent hills, rivers or streams or in some cases they are named after the founder of the village. Originally, all the Ranglong villages had its own meaningful indigenous name. Of late, all those names were replaced by outsiders who came in contact with them. Some examples of such changing names are given here:

INDIGENOUS NAME	REPLACED NAME
Lungkam	Kathuachhora
Joynagar	Balichhora
Laikhua	Thangnang
Enhui	Ujan Thangnang
Lonbung	Mukamtilla
Jarollian	Jarolmura
Saitha	Tingoria

Seisimdung	Duganga
Thumsip	Indurail
Vomthat	Balukchhora
Rothabil	Dolubari
Kheuri	Kunjonagar

As was stated earlier, the entire Ranglong territory was divided into three districts such as Khopui, Khozobak and Sagornal. District is termed as "Chemchoi" in Ranglong dialect. Accordingly, the villages were also fallen into district wise.

SITE SELECTION OF THE VILLAGE

In the case of selection of the village site, the Ranglongs are very much careful and take into consideration whether the proposed site is free from any disease and whether water facility is available or not. Generally an elevated breezy land or a hill top to a low lying land or river valley is preferred for a village site. The size of any village may vary from twenty houses to a hundred houses. To select the village site a group of five or six older members of the village used to go to the proposed site. They want to know the approval of the God behind the selection of the village site by making a toss. The oldest member of the group cut a piece of bamboo vertically into two and held it together. After saying a few words of chanting he dropped the splited bamboo to fall upon the ground. If the two pieces fall upon the ground in positions which are contrary to each other, they deem it to be a good sign. If, however, the pieces fall in a way which does not communicate any sanction of the unseen, they have custom to try the luck for a couple of times through toss. In circumstances when approval of the supernatural is not obtained, they used to have the idea that the side is not worthy for human habitation. According to the position of the splited bamboo dropping on the ground they either decide to settle at that site or go for another site. These words are chanted while dropping the splited bamboo:

"O Pathian, hiva sip anthang le dam anzar a huia,
Hiva hin nei om rang,
Hiva hin na omin, a ring le a dama om mani mo?
Hiva hin na omin , khua lianpa om ni mo?
Aril le atai ei thui rang,
Hiva hin nei om rang a ni zei".

MEANING OF THE CHANTING

"O God, we intend living on this pleasant hilly place,
Shall we be healthy in this place?
Let there be good village administration,
We shall now settle here".

PRESENT SETTLEMENTS

The Ranglongs are mainly concentrated in the hilly terrain of the northern part of Tripura. They also live in Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of Assam and on the north west of Mizoram. Most of the villages of Tripura are located near the National Highway 44. Now the Government of Tripura is concentrating the Ranglong areas with special care and attention. Almost all the villages had already been electrified and there are good roads in all the villages. Most of the villages are linked with the National Highway by black top roads. Within a short distance of five to seven kilometres only, a high school and medical centre is now available even in a hilly areas. Whereas, the Ranglongs of Assam state are very far from developmental activities and still living in the remote areas where they have to walk many kilometers on foot to reach the local market, which were mainly connected by katcha road. The Ranglongs of Mizoram are equally treated with the Mizos in all spheres.

SOME OLD SETTLEMENTS

As was already stated earlier, the Ranglongs were migratory tribes moving from place to place in search of productive fields for jhum cultivation. They do not stay on in a place permanently. Their movement is conditioned by the availability of livelihood. In the past, the Ranglongs had settled down in various places in their migratory route moving towards the area of their present settlement. But after some years of their settlement in any village, they used to abandon it again and moved to another area as they did not have a culture to settle in a place permanently. And hence there were no any permanent settlement in the Ranglong area. When they were to abandon the village, they used to sing the song which run:

"Nuar no ro nang khopui hui,
Par senkhat a chuaia ase nam;
Chuai lui ril par a lanpiang zel,
Rai mansan ro,
O khopui hui"

MEANING OF THE SONG

"Do not cry O my pleasant hamlet,
Some flowers are deceasing,
An ever blooming flower is coming,
Be happy,
O my pleasant hamlet".

Some of the old hamlets of the Ranglongs that they had abandoned in the past are given here:

1. Biltoi – It was a Ranglong village mixed with Bengalees. So they

narrated the village by singing this song. Now it is dominated by Bengalees. Since so long lapse of time and years, the Ranglongs were maintaining peace to live with their neighbours under congenial atmospheres.

"Biltoi vangkhua a huia,
San a dum,
Gobindo anhem langine"

MEANING OF THE SONG

"In the pleasant hamlet of Biltoi,
A tall gentleman,
Govinda is roaming".

2. Baniachung Punji – In the Syhlet area, there was a province named Baniachung Punji which area was 535 square kilometers. From the very name of this place, it can be said that at one time the place was concentrated by the Ranglong people.

3. Champabari – An old village of the Ranglongs was located in the hill range of Adom hills of present Bangladesh. The village may be of mixed population.

4. Doiargul – It was once dominated by the Ranglongs but it becomes now a village of Bengalees. It is in North Tripura.

5. Goboisora – From this village the Ranglong Chief was appointed by the British Superintendent of the Lushai Hills. Ringparsuam was the Ranglong chief who was appointed by the British to look after his province. It is now located in Mizoram and left with no habitation.

6. Hatai –An old Ranglong village now located in Bangladesh. The village may be of mixed population.

7. Horma – It was also a Ranglong village now located in Bangladesh. Horma is the name of a river through which the people of the Khozobak district entered Tripura.

8. Huapa – It was an old village of the Ranglongs located now in Bangladesh.

9. Kolompa khua – It was an old village of the Ranglongs located now in Bangladesh.

10. Kusai khua – It was on the bank on Kusiara located now in Bangladesh.

11. Nolmanlam – Nolmanlam was very close to Sagornal Punji where the Ranglongs established a big village when they were in Syhlet Province. They used to sing a song about Nolmanlam which run:

"Nolmanlam santhang,
Ruphaia chimo,
Siar sipa thainu,
Lalsoka zono,
Ngaidi zol santhang,
Van ruia zono,
Chei ro chei ro,
Birkula chei ro,
Ringniangnu melruang phuana bui,
Ringniangnu sam phai,
At lama ta rei"

MEANING OF THE SONG

"A woman of Nolmanlam,
She is not comparable with other women of other villages,
You will never find like her,
So let your mind be attentive,
To do works in the field".

12. Noldori – Noldori, an old Ranglong village was adjacent to Sagornal Punji located now in Bangladesh.

13. Oilam – An old habitation of the Ranglongs in Syhlet province.

14. Rupasora khua – It was an old village of the Ranglongs located now in Bangladesh.

15. Sagornal Punji – Sagornal Punji was a big Ranglong village located in Syhlet Province. George A. Grierson mentioned that the Ranglongs were living in Sagornal Punji during 1800 – 1900 A.D.[37]

16. Solngui – Solngui village was named after the name of Solngui flower. Solngui is a kind of flower. At one time it was dominated by the Ranglongs but it is now dominated by plai people and is located in Assam.

WHAT ARE THEIR PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS?

As the Ranglongs are of the Mongoloid racial stock, they bear Mongoloid features. The physical characteristics of the Ranglongs are like that of the Halam. The males are of medium height with good physique having well built muscles of hands, legs and knees. The face is slightly round in shape having very less beards like other Indo-Mongoloid people. Their chest is not broad and almost looks flat. The nose is not erected but a bit flat. The hair is black, hard, straight and wavy. The colour of the skin is not dark but yellowish tinge, light brown and dark brown. The eyes are a bit small and slightly pressed. The females are generally shorter than the males with good physique having well built body. They have black hair but of short length.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RANGLONG

The Ranglong tribe has distinct characteristics of its own; they have certain features in common. In those good past days, the Ranglongs were simple, truthful, honest, friendly, frank, brave, cheerful humorous, courteous, hospitable, generous, healthy, active, strong, religious, self reliant and independent in outlook, they respected their elders and admired bravery and they loved justice. But over the years, in the process of change and modernization, cultural evolution and innovations, cross-cultural contact and cultural diffusions and acculturation process, all these beautiful ways of life are disappearing rapidly. Now many of the old natures, habits, conventions, fashions, values, manners, temperament have changed and have assimilated the new form and ways of life. The Ranglong tribe is so markedly different from their other tribal neighbours because they were not head-hunters, but were peace loving people.

WHO WAS WHO AMONG THE RANGLONG

The following were among the Ranglongs who occupied the honour of being first in the past:

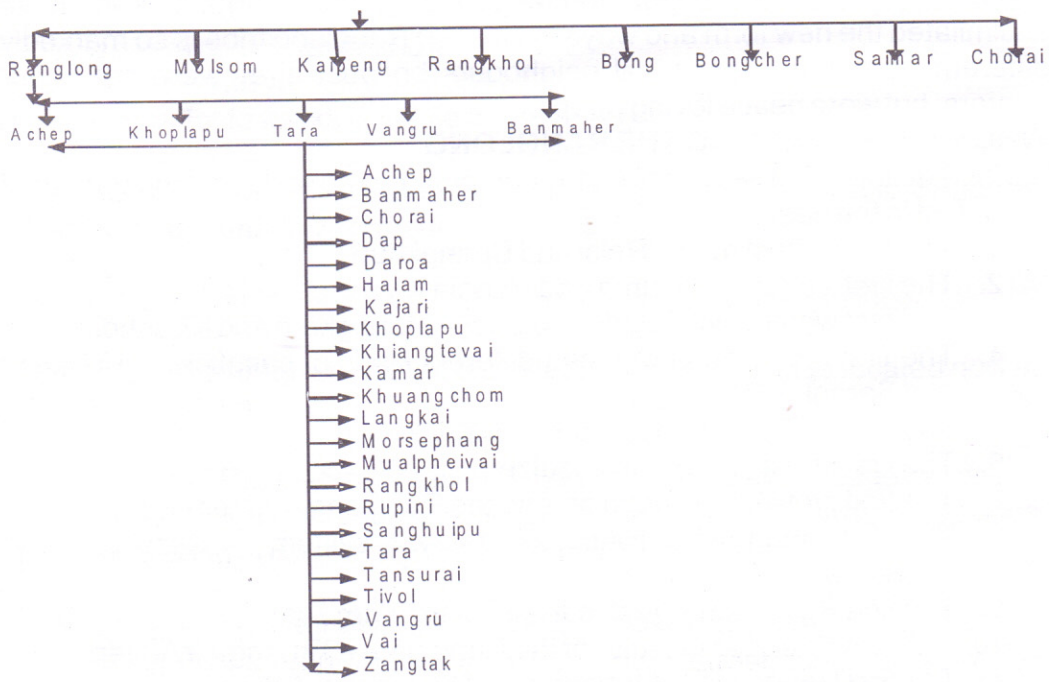
1. The first richest men – Relsi and Buangkhup
2. The first singers – Huluma and Radoia
3. The first women who made rice beer – Muangkem and Khonhoi
4. The first men who introduced different kinds of sacrifices – Khuisam and Saroni
5. The first man who tamed bison – Sianlek
6. The first priest-Ochai – Rualzuizem.
7. The first grower of kangku among the Ranglong – Ramnenghoi
8. The first men who practiced pamyat system – Sazukma and Luangthaima
9. The first Ralrat, strongest man – Khuansairun Tara
10. The first Khangaraia, ruler of the Ranglong – Tiruangthir Achep
11. The first Halamasa – Mahamunsip Ringkamrai Achep
12. The first man who practiced Zandoi, sacrifice offered at night – Sanareisa

13. The first man who practiced Khalai system, sharing the sacrificial meat – Vai soilapi
14. The first and only Chief appointed by the British Government – Ringparsuam Banmaher, popularly known as Parsuam.
15. The first Christians of the Ranglong – Lungdomoni, Charuaingir and Rualzomphut.
16. The richest man during the nineteenth century – Zeithangporsat Banmaher
17. The strongest man during the nineteenth century – Ringparlian Barmaher, popularly known as Parlian.
18. The first Pastor of the Ranglong – Rev. Simlalchuang Ranglong
19. The first Christian among the Halamasa – Ringchunbum Banmaher.

THE GEONOLOGY OF THE RANGLONG CLAN:

TIBETO-BURMAN

NORTH EAST INDIA
KUKI-CHIN
OLD KUKI
HALAM



Their forefathers used to say, "Sim rachi changkoloi, chongthu rachi", which means the history of past and the history of Chongthu. They also claimed that they were the origin of Chongthu. The Ranglongs are so closed to the Hmar in terms of language. The word "Monisi" which means human is probably derived from the word "Manmasi" or "Moneseh".

CHONGTHU GENEOLOGY

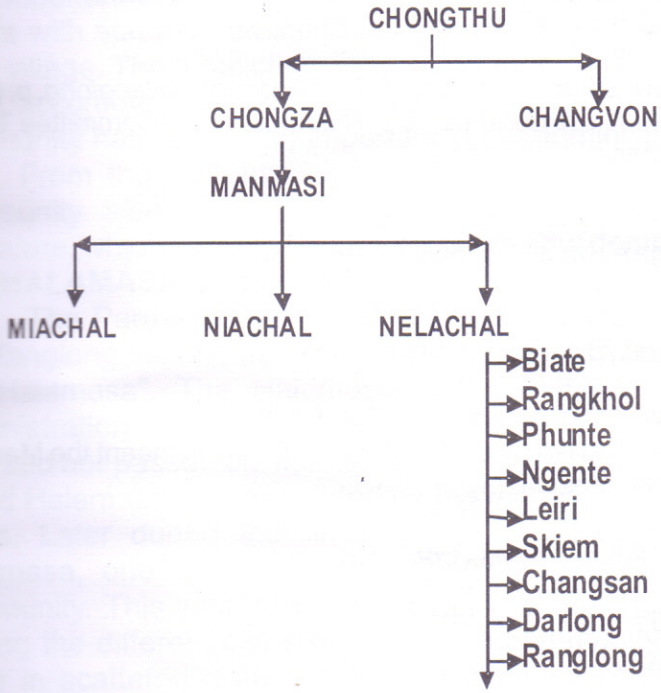


Figure3. In Chin Hills, Chongthu and Mar people were living together.

END NOTES

1. Das Manoshi & Choudhury Jayanta : op.cit., p. 28
2. Grierson George A : op.cit., p. 509
3. Mackenzie Alexander : *The North East Frontier of India*, p. 83
4. Dev Varman,S.B.K.: op.cit., p. 35
5. Singha K.C. (Ed) : op.cit.,p. 129
6. Grierson George A : op.cit., p. 616
7. Dev Varman,S.B.K.: op.cit., p. 35
8. Devbarma S.C. : op.cit., p. 168

9. Chem: It is a big dao given by the Maharaja for sacrificial purpose on 1337, 14 May.
10. Mackenzie Alexander : op. cit., pp. 83 & 146
11. Haokip P.S. : op.cit., p. 19
12. Liangkhaia Rev. : Mizo Chanchin , p. 1
13. Haokip P.S. : op.cit., p. 40
14. Dev Varman,S.B.K.: op.cit., p. 35
15. Bum is a vocabulary of Kachin language which means hill.
16. Liangkhaia Rev. : op.cit., p. 1
17. Halam Thomas : *Khurpuitabum*, p. 1
18. Dev Varman,S.B.K.: op.cit., p. 35
19. "Kachin ulian" means "Kachin is my superior".
20. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : *A Brief Account of Ranglong*, p. 6
21. *Zofate Chanchin* : Published by Historical Sub-Committee,Tahan-Klemyo, Myanmar, p. 170 & 171
24. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : op. cit., p. 5
25. Ibid. p. 5
26. Grierson George A : op.cit., p. 555
27. Haokip P.S. : op.cit., p. 127
28. Sen, K.P. (Ed): *Rajmala Vol. I*, p. 37
29. Singh K.S. : op.cit., p.1245
30. Ibid. p. 1246
31. Tara Tamborlian : *Longvon Simkhuo Rachi*, p. 9
32. Marong – It is hard to tell whether the Marong tribe is meant the Maring or Maram tribe of the present day
33. Kumar Sur, Dr Hirendra : op. cit., p.148
34. Mackenzie Alexander : op. cit.,146
35. Tara Tamborlian : op. cit., 9
36. Grierson George A : op.cit., p. 557
37. Ibid. p. 557

CHAPTER IV

THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

In the past, socially and politically all the tribal communities were under the direct control of the Maharaja of Tripura. But the tribes as a whole enjoyed much of freedom because the Maharaja treated the chief of a tribe as a subordinate king. Each tribe had its own chief under whom there were others with status in descending order down to the kalim or choudhuri for each village. The tribal chiefs were all in all in their respective territories and ruled according to their own traditional customary system. Every tribal community has its own an important socio-administrative unit at the village level. From the time immemorial, like other tribal people, the Ranglong community also had their own system of village administration and judicature, which is not hereditary monarchy but democratic in nature.

THE HALAMASA

The Parualanthum is the apex socio-administrative organization of the Ranglong community. The supreme head of the Parualanthum is known as "Halamasa". The Halamasa is the highest post in the system of administration and in the hierarchy of authority. But the post is neither inherited nor passed on clan to clan. It is said that in the early days one chief called Halamasa was appointed by the Maharaja to rule all over the Halam tribes. Later during the time of Tangterai Chorai, who was the third Halamasa, one Halamasa was appointed for each clan of the Halam community. This was due to the fact that there was difference of opinion among the different clans of the Halam community. Since then they were living in scattered areas. A single Halamasa could not carry out proper administration over the whole Halam people. Moreover, it was quite possible that there was ill-feeling or jealousy if there was a single Halamasa belonging to one particular clan. The chief, who was appointed by the Maharaja to the position of chieftainship, was called Halamasa. Halamasa is the highest post in the system of administration who acted as the king over the whole Ranglong people. All the Ranglong villages were under the direct control of the Halamasa. The Halamasa is worshipped in each village. During the puja called "Khodoi" all the boys from five years of age to full grown youth have to worship the Halamasa. In the beginning, though the Halamasa was appointed by the Maharaja of Tripura, but later, they had begun to have its Halamasa selection by themselves. Since the Halamasa plays an important role in the administrative structure, there are certain criteria and qualifications to be fulfilled by the intending candidate. To occupy the most dignified post of Halamasa, a person should be one of the older members

among the whole community. While selection of Halamasa is done, administrative power, economic position and other capabilities of the person is also viewed. "Tormari" is a kind of sacrifice offering by the intending candidate of the Halamasa. There are two kinds of tormari – "Arok tormari" and "Kalim tormari". The candidate should compulsorily perform the two types of tormari before assuming the office of the Halamasa. It is not out of place to mention here that it is a big burdensome to perform the sacrifice of tormari. However, one cannot occupy the highest post in the system of administration in the Ranglong community if it is not performed. The Halamasa occupies his post till death. But the post of Halamasa is neither inherited nor passed on clan to clan. The authority of the Halamasa was absolute in his territory as the royal authority had never interfere in the social life of the Ranglong society. The general administration of the whole territory was conducted by the Halamasa.

For any decision of social, economic and political nature the whole Ranglong community had to depend upon the advice and decision of the Halamasa. He used the court for trial cases with the help of his subordinate staff. The subordinate staff assisted the Halamasa in matters of administration. Whenever cases or disputes are tried the staff played a very important role. There is no permanent headquarter of administration.

The village from where the Halamasa was appointed is usually made as the centre of administration. The subordinate staff are selected and appointed by the Halamasa on the basis of their seniority and eligibility. Sometimes the Maharaja used to invite the Halamasa in annual Hasam Bhojan. The superior status of the Halamasa during "Hasam Bhojan" is noticeable. When the Maharaja gave appointment of Halamasa, His Highness offered some gift of arms as token of the royal insignia, such as Asei-1, Belri-1, Beromoihalna-1, Chemlian-1, Kaman-2, Kenchi-3, Khendai-1, Medal-1, Patalung-1, Phocheng-1, Pistol-3, Ruangchaiche-1, Rupachongthi-1, Saiha-1,Seimor-1,Sumsen-1, Thirlunglom-1, Thirphalla-1, Thirsiailung-1, Thirphurai-1, Tirsul-1. Dangkari-1.[1] Due to long lapse of time and years, it was not possible to ascertain when the gift of arms were given to the Ranglongs and by whom it was given. Some view suggests that the gift of arms were given to the Ranglongs when they were concentrating the Syhlet province. If these were given to them in the Syhlet province, then Birchandra Manikya was the Maharaja of Tripura. After the death of Ishan Chandra Manikya on 1st August 1862, Birchandra Manikya ascended the throne and died on 11th December 1896.[2] If it was given by Birchandra Manikya, then the age of the gift of arms would be about 130 – 140 years. Some say that the gift of arms was given by Maharaja Birbikram Kishore on 1337, 14th May at Noagang in Tripura. If it was given by Birbikram Kishore, then the age of the gift of arms would be 90 years.

NARANKHOROL

The official tour of the Halamasa is called "Narankhorol". After completion of three years from the day of installation in the post of Halamasa, he is supposed to have official tour in every village of the Ranglongs. Practically the Halamasa did not pay visit to all the villages of the Ranglongs in person; he used to appoint representative on his behalf to have such tour. Whenever the official tour of the Halamasa is held, all the revenues collected by the village Kalim is given to the Halamasa. The Sadar Kalim of each province would accompany the Halamasa while having the tour. When the official tour is held, the Halamasa is welcomed and received with high honour by all the villagers with all the musical instruments including the drum. At the demise of the Halamasa, the oldest Sadar Kalim among the three Sadar Kalims would assume the charge temporarily before the selection of the next Halamasa is made. It is worth to be mentioned here that the Sadar Kalim who assumed the charge of the Halamasa would not be called Halamasa, and hence the period during the absence of Halamasa is called "Sorkari".

LIST OF HALAMASA

It cannot be definitely said when the appointment of Halamasa was started in the Ranglong society. No reliable opinion is available in this regard. When the Ahom King Rudra Singh sent his two convoys namely Ratna Kandali and Arjun Das to the Royal Court of Tripura in 1710, the two convoys came to know the Kukis and made their report: *"We....reached the mouth of the Rupini river which is the boundary between Cachar and Tripura. There is no human habitation in that place. There are hills on both sides. After three days we arrived at Rangrung within the jurisdiction of Tripura. The hills on both sides of the Barak river are inhabited by a tribe called the Kukis who are like the Daflas and Nagas here. There will be about three hundred men at that place; their weapons are arrows, bows, shields and Naga spears. The Tripura Raja appointed a Governor over this place, and he is called Haloncha..."*[3] Here the "Rangrung" clan of Kukis and the Governor called "Haloncha" are mentioned by the two convoys. There is no doubt that the two words stand for the "Ranglong" and the "Halamasa" respectively.
If it is so then it could be ascertain that the appointment of Halamasa had already been started by 1700 AD. But it is not possible to write down all the names of the Halamasa as no proper record was found, yet some of them are listed here.[4]

1.	Mahamunsip Ringkamrai Achep	1785 – 1799 AD
2.	Zuarpor Khoplapu	1803 – 1808 AD
3.	Tangterai Chorai	1812 – 1817 AD
4.	Sumbursuam Tara	1821 - 1827 AD
5.	Thangrilrai Banmaher	1831 - 1834 AD

6.	Ringsonlian Banmaher	1839 - 1842 AD
7.	Ringchunbum Zangtak	1846 - 1850 AD
8.	Thanglianlal Langkai	1854 - 1860 AD
9.	Zeithangnang Banmaher	1863 - 1871 AD
10.	Satipar Rupini	1877 - 1884 AD
11.	Sapanbum Khoplapu	1890 - 1897 AD
12.	Bodorthang Banmher	1901 - 1905 AD
13.	Chondonchung Banmaher(Kekiakte)	1909 - 1916 AD
14.	Thangrilpor Banmaher	1920 - 1921 AD
15.	Dorbochuang Sanghuipu	1925 - 1927 AD
16.	Rangpansuam Tansurai	1931 - 1937 AD
17.	Bulopchuang Chorai(Tichong andomluipa)	1940 AD
18.	Donsolian Achep	1945 - 1946 AD
19.	Sumneingul Rupini	1949 - 1957 AD
20.	Vanchuangthang Achep	1960 - 1968 AD
21.	Ringhoiril Langkai	1976 - 1980 AD
22.	Suamneilal Achep	1995 - 2004 AD
23.	Ringchunbum Banmaher	2004 - 2010 AD
24.	Thangzuiril Tara	2011 - Till date

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

As was stated earlier, the Halamasa is the highest post in the system of administration. The general administration of the whole territory was conducted by the Halamasa. To increase efficiency and to ensure progress in the administration, the entire territory of the Ranglong is divided into three districts – Khopui, Khozobak and Sagornal.

THREE COURTSHIPS

Traditionally, the Ranglong Socio-Administrative set up is consisted of three courtships which they term as "Parualanthum". The literal meaning of parualanthum is three brothers. The three courtships are Khopui, Khozobak and Sagornal. During the times of their settlement in the Syhlet province, the Ranglongs were concentrated in only three villages namely Khopui, Khozobak and Sagornal. Each of these three villages is called "Chemchoi". District is termed as "Chemchoi" in Ranglong dialect. Accordingly, the villages were also fallen into district wise. And these three chemchoi are collectively called Parualanthum. The Parualanthum is the apex socio-administrative organization of the Ranglong community.

KHOPUI DISTRICT

Khopui means big village. Khopui is the biggest administrative set up with the biggest population in the Ranglong Socio Administrative Organization. The Ranglongs inhabited along the bank of the river Langkai in Karimganj district of Assam, the Ranglongs of Cachar and Hailakandi districts of Assam, the Ranglongs of Mizoram and the Ranglongs living in Zoitang, Laikhua, Enhui, Bagbasa, Lungthirek, Tivalian and Lilamkhar

villages of Tripura are belonging to Khopui district of the Ranglong Socio Administrative set up.

KHOZOBAK DISTRICT

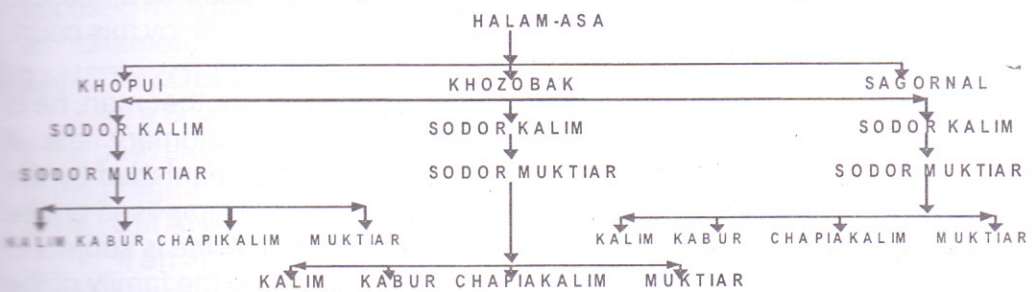
Khozobak is the second biggest administrative set up in the Ranglong Socio Administrative Organization. The Ranglongs inhabited along the bank of the Horma and Thalkang rivers are called Khozobak Chemchoi. Khozobak means a branch of village. Khozobak are of two groups as "Sak Khozobak" and "Thang Khozobak" which mean South Khozobak and North Khozobak.

SAGORNAL DISTRICT

Sagornal is the smallest administrative set up in the Ranglong Socio Administrative Organization. The Ranglongs inhabited along the bank of river Cholri are called Sagornal Chemchoi. The river Juri is called "Cholri" in the Ranglong dialect. Originally those Ranglongs inhabited in the Sagornal Punji were called Sagornal Chemchoi.

From these three districts, three officials, one from each zone is selected who will serve under the Halamasa. These officials are termed as "Sadar Kalims". The Sadar Kalims play very important role in the administrative structure, and they are next to the Halamasa in terms of dignity. Again another three officials, one from each zone is selected who are to assist the three Sadar Kalims. They are termed as "Sadar Muktiars". The Sadar Muktiars are the spokesmen of the Halamasa whose positions are just below the Sadar Kalims. Again each village courtship is administered by an official termed as "Kalim" who is assisted by three officials termed as "Kabur", "Chapia Kalim" and "Muktiar". Initially the village disputes were disposed of in the court of the village officials. The Kalim used to discharge the function of the judge while the Kabur and Muktiar worked as assistant judge and lawyer respectively. If the accuser or the accused person is not satisfied with the decision of the courtship of the Kalim, then the verdict could be challenged. The appellant is allowed to appeal to any court of any zone, or in the court of the Halamasa which ever is applicable to him. The verdict of the Halamasa was final and obligatory. In fact, the Ranglong people were not acquainted with the modern judicial system and seldom approached it as to settle their village disputes. They rather used to approach the courtship of the Halamasa where all kinds of cases were solved by the members of the council of the Halamasa.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP OF THE RANGLONG SOCIETY



RANGLONG CUSTOMARY LAW

The unwritten customs, cultural patterns, convention, social norms and values had been established by old age usage and practices by the members of the Ranglong society and had survived through centuries and handed down through oral tradition by the members of the society as a means of control for the harmony and good relationship among the members of the society. Customary law is an established thought and habit which has gained social recognition in uniform values, supported by common consent of the community. It is the regulating principles of social life and is considered to be binding on all the members of the community. The Ranglong customary justice is the product of natural justice. Though it has transmitted orally from generation to generation, it has been enriched with the experiences gained during the process of practice from centuries. An individual is not allowed to take action for the wrongs inflicted on him, but disputes between individuals are settled in a democratic way, through the village courts by hearing both the parties and their representatives or supporters. The village court is the highest traditional court of justice in the Ranglong Sovereign Village States. The Village Court consists of Kalim, Kabur, Chapia Kalim and Muktiar. All disputes and differences between two or more parties or persons, inter-family disputes and village disputes are settled in the village court. In case, a person or group fails to abide by the decisions of the village court, the court takes action against the culprit. After the course of any action that has taken place, the plaintiff or his representative lodges his complaints to the Kalim, who is also the Chairman of the village court. The Kalim in turn consults his council members and fixes a date for the trial of the case. In hearing, the court entertains points from both the parties and the council members, depending upon the evidences, witness and verification then arrives at a decision which is in accordance with the general feeling of the village. The final decision is pronounced by the Kalim. A decision having being arrived at, the customary punishment is inflicted. This naturally varies with the gravity of the crime committed. The accused person is punished with fines. Therefore, depending upon the seriousness of the case, the judgement is given.

NATURE OF PUNISHMENT AND FINE IMPOSITION

As stated earlier that the village court used to dispose of all cases. Hence cases of theft, robbery, rape, divorce, etc. were dealt with by this court.

KHUN

This is the case of murder. When a person murders another man, he is seriously punished in accordance with the Ranglong customary law. If someone kills another man, it is believed that they are also punished by the supernatural being. According to the customary law, fine was imposed on the murderer. But due to the devaluation of money, the amount of fine is subject to change from time to time. Major portion of this fine is given to the family of the

victim and the rest is shared by the Halamasa and his subordinate officials. It is necessary to mention that nowadays murder case is not applicable to deal with by the village court without any information to the Government.

KHUN ANBAK

It is the case of half murder. If a person is beaten half dead or injured seriously or attempted to murder by someone, the accused person was fined and also charged to pay the cost of medicines and ritual sacrifice. When a person is caught on the ground that he intended to kill another man, then he is also charged to pay fine.

THISARVUAK

It is the case of injury. When a person commits an offence of wound on another person causing bleeding, a fine was imposed on the offender. If the offence was committed while playing games, the fine imposed on the offender was negligible.

MURSONGHEM

When someone is talking many things and cause grievous hurt to another person, he or she is liable to pay fine.

MAKTHA

This is the case of divorce. Whenever there is a divorce case, it is very likely that either a husband or a wife is found guilty. So the divorcing partner has to pay the fine of Rs. 301 to the divorcee.

NUPUISUT

If someone gets marry the wife of another person forcibly, then the accused person was charged the fine of Rs. 2001 along with all the expenditures of the social function. Out of Rs. 2001, the village court wil get Rs. 300 and the rest amount will be paid to the victim.

MI NU MACHAI

This is the case of adultery. The man who commits adultery is charged to pay the fine of Rs. 1101. And the accused woman was made as shameful as possible in such a way that the womenfolk of the village gather and strip off her clothes and apply grinded chillies on her private parts.

PUANTE PHALO

If an unmarried girl commits adultery with a married man, then the accused man has to pay the fine of Rs. 351, and the accused girl would be put as shameful as possible in the same way of the adultery case.

TANGTEZOLLEI

If a boy has sexual relationship with a girl causing her pregnancy, and if the boy refuses to marry her, then the boy has to pay fine as compensation to the pregnant girl.

SAMTUM ANAT

If an angry husband cuts the hair knot of his wife, or if any person cuts the hair knot of a woman, then he is liable to pay fine.

KUARSAT

If the lower part of the ear of a woman is torn by any person, then the accused person is fined.

VUAKALUANG

When a person is beaten half dead, then a fine is imposed on the accused person.

SATANMAIMOK

If any person does not abide by the rules of the village court, then he or she has to pay the fine of Rs, 151.

KHOKHEL

When a person makes an appeal to any court without the knowledge of the village court, the person is liable to pay the of Rs. 201. So all the villagers are supposed to make prior information to the village court before anyone proceed to any court regarding any kinds of problems they confront.

ANRU DABI

This is the case of robbery. If a case of robbery was established, the accused was asked to return the stolen goods alongwith fine of Rs. 601. Out of this, Rs. 150 is given to the village court.

ZUARMARUK

If a boy flees with a girl on mutual consent, they are not separated as the society regards them to be married. But the boy has to pay fine of Rs. 2001. Out of this, Rs. 500 is given to the village court and the rest is paid to the parent of the girl. Rs. 100 out of Rs. 500 is traditionally paid to the eldest brother of the girl.

MURNANGPHIL

If a man married again his divorced wife, then he has to pay a petty amount of fine which is termed as "Munangphil". Traditionally a pot of rice beer is considered as fine.

RUALMADIT A HUANG

If a boy denies marrying his girlfriend with whom he has good relationship for a long time, then he has to pay the fine of Rs. 201 which is termed as "Susemsial". The village court will get Rs. 90 and the rest will be given to the victim.

ZALMUNMACHAI

If a man is found sleeping in someone's bed, particularly in the bed of married woman, then man has to pay the fine of Rs. 301 and the village court will get Rs. 100.

SOME OF THE TERMS REGARDING JUDICIARY

CHUBAI

According to the Ranglong customary laws, only those council members who are having the right of pronouncement of "Chubai" are entitled

to take part in the village court. Anyone cannot pronounce chubai. When a male member of the society attained maturity in age and separated from his parental house, then he is given the right of pronouncement of chubai. Whenever the village court is convened, all the council members used to pronounce chubai before taking rice beer. Traditionally the pronouncement starts in serial form from the oldest to the youngest among the council members. If any wrong decision or judgement is made in the court by any council member, then he is suspended from his post and the right of chubai is also terminated. So whenever cases or disputes are tried the council members played a very important role.

DEVANSENG

While seeking justice, a plaintiff has to pay the requisite fees to the Kalim against the person who did him harm. When an accuser filed case against the accused person to the Kalim, the Tangva then, on the order of the Kalim, used to summon the accused and announced the date of hearing.

CHONGTHINARAPHONG

If the accuser or the accused person is not satisfied with the decision of the courtship of the Kalim, then the verdict could be challenged. The appellant is allowed to appeal to any court of any zone, or in the court of the Halamasa which ever is applicable to him. This procedure is called Chongthinaraphong.

KHUANGANZEM

The literal meaning of khuanganzem is beating the drum. When any wrong decision or judgement is made in the court by any council member, then he is suspended from his post and the right of chubai is also terminated. When such suspension is made against any council member, the Tangva used to beat the drum as to make announcement.

MUKUP

If any family or any member of the society does not follow the rules and regulations of the society, then the society barred him from the participation of any social activities. No one should enter in his house. However, in view of the globalization of the society, mukup is not prevalent now.

MOLOT

When an accused person was not in a position to pay his fine on the day of the council meeting, he is allowed to seek time for final payment. This procedure is called molot.

PALAI

The literal meaning of "Palai" is messenger. Traditionally the accused person is not expected to attend the court in person. So the Kalim used to send a messenger to the accused person to convey the decisions of the court.

KHOTKA

Khotka means rate. Generally the village court used to fix the rate of the fine imposed to the accused person depending on the volume of the crime that he or she committed.

SEIMORHIP

When a man got married with a married woman, the man was fined one pig which would be consumed by the court members. The pig was killed with the spear.

ASAMI

Although it is a borrowed word but adopted as their own language from the time immemorial. The word is used to indicate the offender.

PHOITRATI

The plaintiff is called "Phoitrati" in the judiciary term of the Ranglong Customary Law.

END NOTES

1. Halam Thomas : op. cit., p. 7
2. Roychoudhury, Nalini Rangjan : op. cit., p. 49
3. Kumar Sur, Dr Hirendra : op. cit., p. 148
4. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : op. cit., p. 19

CHAPTER V

THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF RANGLONG

In the past, the Ranglongs were dependent on nature for the fulfillment of even their basic needs for survival such as food, clothing and shelter. There are a variety of edible leafy vegetables, different types of roots, stems, fruits, flowers etc. that grow in abundance in the jungles which are consumed by the Ranglongs for their survival. Mushrooms and bamboo shoots are special delicacy for them. In the case of the traditional economy of the Ranglong society, their life and economy is centralized with forests and its surroundings mainly based on food gathering and food production through the ordinary jhum cultivation. Since they were a migratory race, there could be no way for them to make a sustained effort for the stable economic life. They lived a primitive life completely isolated from the modern civilization. Their needs were almost common and few and they could manage to be self-sufficient of their basic requirements like food, shelter and clothing in their own way within their limited resources. They could produce sufficient quantity of paddy for their family consumption from the jhum cultivation. Their was no labour division in the Ranglong society. Tools and techniques were simple, few and indigenous. The economy was self sufficient. Every family used to perform each activity to meet the demands of the family but with no expectation of profit. The owner himself was a labourer.

HOUSING

Housing condition is one of the indicators for measuring overall developmental condition of the households. Housing condition is directly or indirectly linked with economic, social, cultural status of any household. A house with some minimum space, ventilation and light is a basic human requirement. How spacious a house should be depends upon the size of the family. A larger family requires a larger house. In the beginning the Ranglongs had a nomadic attitude towards home. It is therefore the building of a house was of a little consideration to them. Their forefathers used to say –

"Inpui anding antak,
Pampui a zai a bei"– meaning "To build a house is harder than to make a jhum".

The house is termed as "In" in their dialect. In the traditional Ranglong village, the houses were made of wooden posts, bamboo mat for walls and thatch called "Ngaidi" or a kind of palm leaves called "Laisarabua" and the bamboo leaves called "Thopte" were used for roofing. Nails were not used. The houses were generally rectangular in shape and the sizes varied from 10 feet to 20 feet in breadth and 30 feet to 50 feet in length. Generally the

direction of the house is north to south. The type of construction and fashion of the house also varied from family to family, depending on the wealth and social status of the owner. Some used to build their houses on the ground while others used to build them on half raised floor made of bamboo and wood. In the houses especially which were raised about 5 feet above the ground supported by long wooden poles, there was no separate room for cooking or store or guest room but definite areas were set apart for the specific purpose of cooking or storing. No part of the house was reserved for the use of women and children. Of course, the cooking and heating areas were prepared with mud and were known as "Ratap" and "Tapleng" respectively. The inner most part of the house was reserved for the head of the family termed as "Thongkar". No outsider is allowed to enter in the Thongkar area. The different parts of the traditional Ranglong house is as follows: Tualvuk, tappui, arap, azar, nason, tikolakung, tapleng, thongkar, simbak, panthang, aseng, inrapum, choravuk, leikhobang, chormer. Changkala, zongmal, dongkor, phaivodung, etc. The house has two verandas – one in the front is known as "Tual", and the other at the rear side is known as "Chor". The traditional Ranglong house is made of the following elements: Chopui, luangkhang, tanthek, anchamrabul, chokesamnei, kalte, phelte, sangansi, tangkhang, bang, makot, khorlong, suakkhar – khopui suakkhar and kharlon, maliang, pakhalai, mathung, thakurboso, vakhai, phelrai, inmaduli, noktekar, nokurung, thopte, thuaiphelrai, rakil, chungphelrai, thungrazul, insialraki. The traditional Ranglong house was serving multifarious purpose, congested with foodstuff, utensils, earthen pots and bowls, ground bottles etc. Over the hearth, racks are suspended from the roof on which meat, paddy and other things were dried. The well to do family used to erect a separate house for keeping crops in front of their house. They termed it as "Sasiar". If the family is not affluent then they just used to make a separate place of crop within the house itself which is termed as "Uiterakul". In the Ranglong village, the houses were closely clustered. Generally the houses were built on either side of the street. Till the early part of 1970, there was no any single house used tin for roofing in the entire Ranglong area. But after 1970, it was noticed that only few of the well to do could effort to build their houses with cemented floor and used tin for roofing. In the early part of 1984, there were only three concrete buildings in the Ranglong area. During the period of 1980 – 1990, some areas where Bengali influence was strong, they adopted the Bengali pattern of houses like Mud walls which they called "Phil In". As a response to modernity, the year of 2000 is a new era for the Ranglong society relating to material culture. There have been conscious attempts to develop themselves in all spheres particularly in the field of material culture.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

The indigenous household goods of the Ranglongs were made of clay,

bamboo, wood and leaf. The household goods were very simple. The Ranglongs used to store water in a long and bulky bamboo called "Tithei" and used the gourd bottle called "Ti-um". Rice is cooked in a vessel called "bephil" made of clay. Curry is cooked in a piece of bamboo called "Langkhan". Other utensils used in the kitchen like makhe – big spoon, bukoi – small spoon, lumphia – broom, zamza – hand fan etc. were either made of wood or bamboos which were universal found in all the villages. Their main plate to serve food is banana leaves which they called "Na". Besides these, the following traditional utensils were also used: Besing, bubel, munbubel, bukoi, makhe, besut, kherchep, hata, siailung, ngathulangkhan, morsesuklangkhan, napor, ti-um, tilai, zubuang, haisua, tithei, etc. Nowadays the utensils of alluminium have replaced the old traditional utensils in the household of the Ranglong society.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

Agriculture depended on the primitive type of implements. The tilling of jhum field was mostly done with the help of hoe. Most of the agricultural implements are made of iron or bamboo. Some of the important implements and their uses are given below:

CHEM

Dao is called "Chem". It is the most important of all agricultural implements. In fact, the chem is a lifelong companion for a Ranglong, because wherever he goes, either to the field or forest, or to a feast, marriage, ritual ceremonies, festivals, hunting, funeral, food gathering or construction of house or granary, he never parts with the chem. It is used for chopping fire-wood, cutting meat and vegetables, wood carving, community works etc. The chem is an all purpose implements. Jungles are cleared, branches or trees are slashed and trees are felled with the chem. Mention may be made that the Ranglong chem was very much popular to the Lushais due to its sharpness.

REI

Axe is termed as "Rei". It is used mainly for felling bigger trees and making fire wood from heavy logs. It is also used in shaping decorative works made from logs.

KODAL

Spade is called Kodal. Wherever earth cutting is required, it is done with a spade. It is a borrowed implement from the neighbouring communities. The word "Kodal" itself is also not native but foreign word. Most probably the Ranglongs were not using it in the past. They adopted it as a part of implement in their culture in the course of time.

HOE

This implement is mainly used in tilling the jhum fields. Weeding is also done with this. Hoe is termed as "Luichuanchem".

KOITE

Sickle is called "Koite". It is used to reap the ripe paddy. It is also used for cutting ngaidi for roofing the house.

DAM

Mat is called "Dam". It is made of plaited bamboo splits and is used in the field during winnowing the paddy. It is also used for drying chillies, paddy, yam leaves, oil seeds etc.

LONGKHAI

It is a kind of basket used for all purposes. It is mainly used for carrying paddy, oil seeds, cottons and vegetables. Longkhai is hung from the head with a plaited cane strap which is called "Namri" and it rest on the back. Thus the whole weight is sustained by the head with the back giving support. In this way they can carry loads for long distances over hill places.

SENGKONG

It is also a kind of basket made of plaited bamboo splits and mainly used for carrying water and fire wood.

JHUM CULTIVATION

Shifting cultivation is regarded to be the most primitive method of agriculture as food gathering activities of primitive people. In India, the people of eastern and north-eastern region practice shifting cultivation on hill slopes. Shifting cultivation is locally known as Jhum cultivation. Tripura is a tiny state in north-eastern region of India, shifting cultivation is deeply integrated into social, cultural and economic life style of many tribal groups. A good number of households of Tripura were entirely dependent on jhum for their livelihood.

The Tripuri and the Reang tribes were the two major communities dependent on jhum cultivation accounting for about 55% of all the jhumia families in the state.[1] Like other tribal people of Tripura, the Ranglongs are also by tradition shifting cultivators. Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation is the traditional and primary occupation of the Ranglong society. Jhum cultivation is termed as 'Lui' in Ranglong dialect. They have been surviving in a subsistence economy. Under the system of shifting cultivation, a fertile land on the hill slopes is cultivated by clearing the jungles. The weeds, reeds, trees and so on are cleared in the area of cultivation. It is then cultivated for the year and the next year they used to shift to another place and the same process is continued. Each season new plots were cultivated and the old one left fallow. This continued till about 12 to 16 years have lapsed, when the first plot is ready for cultivation. In some areas, a field is cultivated for two or three consecutive years and then shift to another fertile land and so on, completing the cycle in about seven years. This is done where land is scarce, which may be due to increase in population or less area of cultivable land. Before the selection of field for jhum is made, certain rituals and propitiations are done to determine whether the field would be suitable for cultivation or not. Like other tribes of Tripura, Jhum cultivation or shifting cultivation is the traditional and primary occupation of the Ranglongs.

SITE SELECTION

Jhum cultivation being the main occupation of the Ranglongs since so long lapse of time and years, they used to go out to select the suitable fertile hill for raising jhum in the early autumn. Generally, the slopes of the hills are reckoned suitable for jhum cultivation. Traditionally the Ranglongs believe the existence of two deities known as "Rampi" and "Rampu" who are regarded as the owners of the forest. They want to know the approval of these deities behind selection of jhum by making a toss. A piece of bamboo is thus cut vertically into two and throws above to fall upon the ground. Before throwing the toss above to fall upon the ground, they offer this prayer to the deities:

"Hiva ram hi luining chumun ka thon,
A ring a dama om ning mo?
Bu samon patmon man ning mo?
A lua a khang mo om?"

MEANING OF THE PRAYER

"If I select this hill for my jhum,
Shall I be alive?
Will you bestow me your blessing with good quantity of rice and cotton?
Will any deity object this hill?"

If the two pieces fall on the ground in positions which are opposite to its other, it is regarded to be a good sign. But if the pieces fall in a way which does not communicate any sanction of the unseen, then they have custom to try their luck for a couple of times through toss. In circumstances when approval of the deities is not obtained, the plot, however suitable it may be, would be abandoned. If the approval of the deities is obtained through the toss, then a piece of bamboo pole would be planted upon which two thin pieces would be fixed crosslike to let others know that this particular plot has been chosen by some one. The bamboo pole is termed as "Phar". If some one dreams a sweet dream the plot would be deemed to be the harbinger of affluence and the next phase of work would follow then.

CUTTING THE FOREST

After the site selection for jhum has been done, the next phase of programme becomes cutting the jungle. The clearance of the jungle is termed as "Pamvat". It is usually done in the month of Vatchangtha, the first month of the Ranglong calendar. Generally Vatchangtha falls in the month of January. It is a hard job and hence, requires a lot of labours. They used to co-operate among them in cutting the jungle. Such a system of team work or corporate labour is commonly termed as "Lom". While cutting the jungle, the members

of the Lom used to sing this song:

"Pambe don mairua,
Tan ro manse ro" – meaning "Cut the bamboos and throw it away".

There is a system of cutting the jungle. Generally they do not start cutting the jungle from the top of the hill to the slopes, rather, from the down gradually to up. It is said that Sazukma and Luangthaima were the first men who practiced the pamvat system. Nobody collects the bamboos and trees for fuel, because everybody knows that to burn the soil, these bamboos and trees would be essential for the cultivator.

BURNING THE JUNGLE

When the felled jungle is dried up, the plot is set on fire generally in the month of March when rain is yet to begin. The Ranglongs are not ignorant about the consequence of jungle fire. They used to mark with attention the direction of the wind and set fire when it is favourable. It serves two ends – saving the villages from anticipated fire and burning the jhum quickly and nicely with the help of favourable wind. If someone looks to the hills during a March eve he would simply be spelled bound by the splendid beauty of the jhum fire. Traditionally the Ranglongs had to sow Kangku, a kind of vegetables, on the day of burning the jhum. This practice is still current in the Ranglong society. It is said that Ramnenghoi was the first grower of kangku in the jhum.

There is a saying –

"Kangku ling mansa nu,
Ramnenghoi ram neng kangku" – meaning "Ramnenghoi was the first woman to grow kangku"

Traditionally they do not visit, the burnt jhum just after burning it. After an interval of a day they used to visit their jhum as to know whether it was nicely burnt or not, and if there is somewhere fire could not breakout and then they burnt it well again. The Ranglongs have series of rites to perform throughout the entire jhum from cutting the jungle to the harvest. Just before sowing any kinds of crop in the jhum, the well to do owners and the ochai used to go to the jhum and offer a sacrifice which they termed it as "Chichoi". Traditionally they had to perform this sacrifice by offering not less than twentyfive fowls. After offering the sacrifice, the ochai would start sowing paddy in the jhum which would be followed by other older members which they termed it "Samitzing". The ochai would offer this prayer –

"Chempot moipot dai ro,
Andur ansar dai ro
Mur anzum le bai anza,
A nek rang le a sak rang dora,
Mur ka mahip
Andur rang le ansar rang om thei mak,

A lu ka tok a lu ei kui rang,
A ke ka tok a ke ei kiak rang,
A mit ka tok a mit ei zing rang"

MEANING OF THE PRAYER

"Let the fire stop now,
Let there be no accident of using dao;
I shut the mouth of all the insects to destroy the jhum,
I break their heads and legs,
I close their eyes".

By reciting this prayer, the ochai would throw the pieces of vegetable over the jhum. The ochai prepared the vegetable with seisim, malong and chanlong mixed with an egg which is regarded as medicine to protect their crops from the insects. Seisim and malong are a kind of wild plants, and chanlong is plaintain plant. These three plants are the required ingredients to prepare the medicine by the ochai. Generally crops are sown in the month of March – April. Besides paddy, a number of crops are also sown in the jhum. Paddy is the principal cereal crop. Cultivation of jhum starts only after a few showers. Some of the crops are sown ahead of sowing paddy while others are done together or after it. They do not mix various paddy seeds to sow while other kinds of vegetables and cereal seeds are generally mixed together and sown in the jhum. The jhum thus becomes an all inclusive mixed crop field where various vegetables such as oilseed, cotton, maize, pumpkin, melon, cucumber, ginger, turmeric, brinjal, chilly and other available crops are grown. Beside these, they also used to grow bal, bemarul, sakma, khamchok, morol, ansa, kumhoi, anthur, um, mola, satun, nim, bething, beloi, bethaite, bathumpang, thalingbang, bara, kangku, khokholeng, thurakha, bechuk, lengmaser, sonoroi, khumzem and parsen. The Ranglongs do not consume anything from their jhum unless it is offered in the "Simbak". Simbak is a kind of rack made of bamboos which is used to put clothes and other things. Traditionally, except the paddy, the seeds of other kinds of crops are sown by the females. The paddy seed is sown by both the males and the females. The seeds of paddy and other kinds of crops are kept in a special type of basket called "Sineng" and carried on the back of the cultivator. While sowing the paddy seed in the jhum, they used to throw some grain of paddy over the jhum by saying –

"Mualpui liai ro,
Sachi tui ro" – meaning "Let the paddy seed cover all the hills".

The only agricultural implement of the Ranglongs is "Chem". Weeding of the jhum is generally done three times by "lom" comprising male and female members of each household in the village. After a month of sowing when earth turns into green lawn in the midst of deep forest wild grasses and roots raise their heads, they immediately used to remove all these wild grasses.

The first weeding is generally done in the month of May – June and is called "Luiram". Again after a month or so the second weeding is done and is termed as "Manni". The third weeding is done in the month of July – August which is called "Zarpot". When the weeding is done in the jhum, this song is sung to encourage the lom members:

"Changban rat lai ramlui manboi ro,
Malui antak laidor tho no ro,
Changban rat lai pial,
A hem mantum ro,
A sem manvuang ro"

MEANING OF THE SONG

"We have strong arms,
Let us remove all the wild grasses and roots,
Let us not neglect our hard work,
We have strong arms;
Uproot all the grasses,
And throw them away".

During the period of weeding the jhum, an important festival, which they call it "Chamer", is organized by the whole community which lasts for three days. In the Chamer festival, they worshipped "Sapitenu" which means the owner of paddy for asking blessings from her. They do not forget to adopt measures to protect the jhum from wild animals and birds. They, therefore, construct little hut which is known as "Inchu" at least ten to twelve feet in height above the ground level and live in that to drive out the wild animals and birds. Throughout the days, until the crop is harvested, they keep a constant vigil and drive away the birds and other animals with the help of an instrument made of bamboo which is called "Borbok". When the jhum occupied a vital position to harvest, the adult members used to shift in their jhum where they temporarily took shelter and lived there till harvest. After the crops ripen, harvesting is done as per the maturity of the crops. The harvesting is done generally in the month of September – October. During the time of harvest, this song is sung:

"Chuna zoirengnu,
Na nuk tiang parsai,
Na deng manrual ro,
Kolkaka anpiangnu simkho bongrainu,
Pangmual hong sem ro"

MEANING OF THE SONG

"Mother of paddy,
When we put the grain of paddy in our basket,
Let us throw the grain in the basket together;
From the corner of the earth,
O pleasant wind,
Come and make us cold".

After winnowing, the harvested crops are transported to the village by both the sexes. The next year, another virgin hill is burnt again for the same cultivation. However, in view of the deforestation, the practice of shifting cultivation is eventually declined.

FAMINE

The problem of poverty has been with the human culture since ages. As was stated earlier, the Ranglongs were dependent on nature for the fulfillment of even their basic needs for survival such as food, clothing and shelter in the past. Gradually they started producing food and clothes for themselves. However, poverty was a general problem for them which were mainly caused due to famine. The main reason why famine broke out into the region of the Ranglongs was due to the bamboo flowering. It is said that once in every 50 years the Romai [2] bamboo used to flower and it bore fruits which were eaten by rats. The year 1862 was the first time that the Ranglong experienced the bamboo flowering, the next bamboo flowering was probably in 1911 when the bamboos became dry extensively in the Ranglong land.[3] The next bamboo flowering occurred again in 1961 [4] when the Ranglong experienced it severely. They regarded that year as "Ramkangpa kum" meaning the year of fire. Due to extensive dry of bamboos in the jungle fire broke out and the entire hills appeared into fire. To eat the fruits of bamboo the number of rats increased largely and destroyed the harvest of the jhums. Thus they could not reap the harvest. It was eaten up by the rats and insects. As a result, they could not meet their requirements of rice which lastly led to famine.

HORTICULTURE

View of arecanut plantation in the hilly terrain of the Ranglong land

Most of the tribal people in Tripura live in forest area and, therefore, they are entirely dependent on jhum cultivation for their livelihood. Today the government has taken various steps for the development of the jhumias and more specifically for decreasing of dependency of jhumias on shifting cultivation. As such the fact, the tribal people are provided different kinds of cash crops to plant in their dominated hilly areas on a permanent basis. The case of the Ranglong society is also not much different from the other tribes of Tripura. They are by tradition shifting cultivators. In the olden days the Ranglongs were absolutely refrained from horticulture. The story of arecanute, the mainstay of the Ranglong economy, is even more spectacular. According to the legendary concept the Ranglongs should not plant arecanut as it is believed that when the plant would grow to the height of the planter, the planter would die. However, at present, with the increase of population and with the introduction of sedentary cultivation, their economy has taken a new dimension. They are now trying to subsist on horticulture on a permanent basis. Arecanut is now the bedrock of the Ranglong economy, accounting for some 80% of the cultivated area. Approximately 90% of the total population is now involving in arecanut plantation. To these people, arecanut is not only the chief occupation, a way of life. Every cultivator is now growing arecanut more or less in their cultivated land. Seeing the arecanut plantation in the hilly terrains one could now easily recognize the village as that of the Ranglongs. What is needed is some sort of guarantee for remunerative price and assured sale for this crop. They are now aware of the value of the horticulture, and so started growing different types of cash crops in their fields to meet the cost of their basic needs. Recently it is also observed that they are using their lands for rubber plantation which suits well in the soil of Tripura. About 64% of the total rubber plantations in north-east India are in Tripura. The commercial success of rubber in Tripura led to the creation of the Tripura economic development. Rubber Board of India has declared Tripura the Second Rubber Capital of the country.[5] Today the Ranglongs are also this commercial crop in their land. Besides this, they are growing horticultural crops like arecanut, pineapple, lemon, jackfruit, banana, citrus, spice trees and so on. Recently it is observed that they are also growing tea in their hilly areas. Speaking of other activities, they are accustomed to crafts works, some of them have started to be employed in government service in different departments.

CHEWING ARECANUT

The Ranglong culture and tradition hold arecanut and betel leaf in high esteem. Traditionally, guests who visit a Ranglong house are presented a tray called "Bata" of arecanuts and leaves. Chewing the mixture of arecanut and betel leaf is a tradition and custom of the Ranglong society from the time immemorial. However, they had not been known to the common arecanut and betel leaf in the past. They had a practice of chewing the mixture of a kind of

wild nut called "Relke" and a kind of wild leaf called "Dutpan". They had also not been accustomed to the use of common lime but they used to burn the snail and the ash of snail is used as lime. Of late, they were accustomed to use the common arecanuts and betel leaves and lime. The arecanut is commercially available in dried, cured and fresh forms. Which fresh, the husk is green and the nut inside is soft enough to be cut with a typical knife. In the ripe fruit, the husk becomes yellow or orange and, as it dries, the fruit inside hardens to a wood-like consistency. At that stage, the arecanut can only be sliced using a special scissors-like cutter which is known as "Kuachep". Usually for chewing, a few slices of the nut are wrapped in betel leaf along with lime. Arecanuts are chewed with betel leaf for their effects as a mild stimulant, causing a warming sensation in the body and slightly heightened alertness, although the effects vary from person to person.

SMOKING TOBACCO

We can say that smoking tobacco is also a part of the Ranglong culture and tradition. They used to hold the tradition of smoking tobacco in high esteem from the time immemorial. They used to grow tobacco in their jhum and collect the matured leaves which are later dried in the sun. The dried leaves are then cut into very small pieces and mixed with very poor quality of molasses to prepare the tobacco mixture. This mixture tobacco is called "Dabalui". This tobacco is smoked by a simple instrument called "Daba". A piece of bamboo having knot at the bottom is taken. The opening and the bottom of the bamboo piece is made smooth. At the middle of the bamboo piece a hole is made through which a small pipe like bamboo piece with two sides open is inserted tightly. The head of the small pipe is rubbed so that a bowl which is called "Dabalu" may fit on it. The bowl is filled in tobacco mixture having a piece of hard soil in its bottom. Burnt pieces of wood or charcoal are placed on the tobacco mixture. And then the smoker can smoke by placing his mouth on the opening of the thick bamboo piece. There is no social bar in smoking. Thus smoking tobacco is practiced by male, female and even the children together. Traditionally, guests who visit a Ranglong house are offered tobacco for smoking. It is a must to offer tobacco for smoking to guests as to show hospitality.

REARING OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS

In the early days, owing to their migratory nature, the Ranglongs could not rear any domestic animals and birds. However, nowadays many of them are engaged in dairy, goatary, piggery, poultry farming for generating income and for improving their socio-economic life. They have started now rearing different kinds of domestic animals and birds particularly those residing nearby road heads. It could not be ascertain when exactly this society started rearing domestic animals and birds. But now it has been a common practice among the Ranglongs and they have proved themselves to be good at that. Nowadays they are keeping buffaloes, cows, goats, fowls, dogs, cats, etc.

Now as they started plough cultivation, the domestication of buffaloes and cows become much essential. Formerly, milking was unknown by the Ranglongs. But now buffaloes and cows are also reared for the purpose of milk. In addition to using it as food, some animals and poultry are also required for appeasement of the evil spirits for ransom of the human soul that is in their capacity and also to please the spirits to refrain from hurting and torturing human beings. Animals are also needed when rituals and social functions are performed. Goat is considered the poor man's cow in India. It is a versatile animal, easy to maintain on marginal lands. The Ranglongs do not eat the meat of dogs and cats. Dogs are reared in all the households for the purpose of hunting the wild animals and also to guard the house. Thus the dog used to serve as an escort and best companion to its owner. Every household rear fowls like chicken, ducks, pigeons, etc for its egg and also its meat. They are also used for rituals. Cats are also reared to keep away rats which destroy crops and vegetables. The Ranglongs are very fond of pork, and therefore pigs are reared in almost all the houses. It is not used as a food only but it is also a must in the rituals and social functions.

Among all the domestic animals, pigs are now attended with more care and special fodders are arranged for them. It can be said that there can be no feasts, ceremonies, rituals without pork. Pigs are now kept in the pig-sty but previously they were allowed to roam in the villages freely and eat what they like. One can say that piggery is now the mainstay of the Ranglong economy. As a result of all these cultural and social importance, animals and fowls play very important role in the socio-economic life of the Ranglongs, rearing of animals and birds has become now a part of culture of the Ranglong society.

FISHING

Fishing is one of the important habbits of the Ranglong people. Fishing is done individually or corporately during the months of September – October and lasts till March when water is less in the rivulets. Different methods of fishing are applied for catching fish in the nearby rivulets. The most popular method of fishing is by poisoning the water. This method is called "Aru thuan" in their own dialect, which means applying poison. For this purpose, the stem and roots of a particular creeper, which they call it "Aru" is collected from the jungles a day ahead of the operation. On the day of fishing, people gather with the creepers which are thrashed and mixed with the water in the river. When the water is poisoned with juice of the creeper, the fish gets stupefied and floats on the upper level of the water. Then they used to catch the fish with the help of a basket which they call it "Luang". It is worth to be mentioned that women are not allowed to participate the fishing party when the river is poisoned. The fish thus caught are divided among the fishing party equally. Bamboo baskets of varying sizes, which they call it "Chok", are also used for catching fish. The Choks are made in such a way that once the fish

get into it, it cannot come out. Mention may be made that the Ranglong women are playing a significant economic role in the community. In social affairs also their role is no less important than that of the males. In the religious sphere, however, they are treated as equals and no women can officiate as a priest. In politics also, they have no impact so far. The women contribute to the family income by working as an agricultural labourers.

LENDING AND BORROWING

The Ranglongs are generally self-sufficient of essential commodities to meet their basic needs. They could produce sufficient quantity of paddy for their family consumption. But due to poor harvest on account of natural calamities, some people could not produce enough to last the full year. As such the fact, they usually compel to borrow paddy from others. Generally paddy is borrowed in terms of baskets which they termed as "Phura" and "Peia" respectively. Phura is much bigger in size than Peia. Every creditor, therefore, honestly used to repay the borrowed paddy the next year if one is not too helplessly poor. In this way, the villagers used to help each other in times of scarcity.

MARKETING SYSTEM

In the past the Ranglong society remained outside the influence of marketing system for a very long time. They had no trade and commerce in their tradition. As the matter of fact, there was no any important seat of trade and commerce in the Ranglong land. They lived a primitive life completely isolated from the modern civilization. Their needs were few and they could manage to be self-sufficient of their basic requirements like food, shelter and clothing in their own way within their limited resources. They could produce sufficient quantity of paddy for their family consumption from the jhum cultivation. However, in the course of time, as the essential commodities to meet their basic needs were growing more and more, they came in contact with the outside world. Gradually, they came to practice trade and commerce. They used to carry their agricultural products to the plain and sold them for their requirements which comprised of salt, dried fish, agricultural implements, ornaments and cattle. Of late, after they had been in touch with trade and commerce, the first Ranglong market was established at Noagang in the North Tripura district on 3rd July, 1967 by some affluent persons of the society.[6] Mention may be made the names of Pondorrai Halam, Sumbumpar Halam, Charuaimanik Halam and Mongolsuam Halam who had played an important role relating to the establishment of the market. With a little space of land along the right side of the National High Way No. 44 the market was initially started which was repeated by the hilly people of the nearby villages. Today the market turned into new direction dimension of the market turned into a new shape which is now among the very first important trade centre in the Ranglong area. A word should be added here that the Government of Tripura is paying its prior concentration towards the development of the

market. From 17th July, 1997 it started becoming one of the regulated markets under the TTAADC.[7]

A view of Halam market at Noagang under North Tripura District

WEAVING

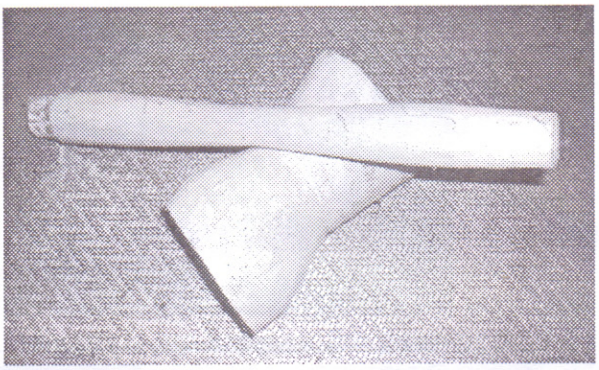
The Ranglongs are self sufficient in textile and weaving. Weaving is practiced by all the grown up females in every household. Weaving is a cultural heritage of the Ranglongs. Originally the Ranglongs grew cotton in their jhum. The ripe cottonbolls are collected from the jhum and dried it for several days in the sun. In order to weave clothes, firstly, the seeds of the cotton are removed by rolling the cottonbolls on a simple machine made of wood termed as "Muiot". Then the cotton is carded by a bow made of cane and bamboo which is termed as "Patsai". Then it is spun into thread on a spindle which is termed as "Ramui", which is again wound up on a bamboo frame named as "Sutlam" to make skeins. These skeins are then soaked in hot rice water for about ten minutes and then dried in the sun. When the skeins are well dried , the women winds the thread into balls ready for weaving clothes. Weaving colthes with decorative designs takes double or more time, depending upon the nature of the designs used. The Ranglong women weave different kind of clothes for different purposes such as Mulri, Patzonpuan, Borki, Khumnang, Zani, Nikni, Risa, Kamsa, Duti and Puannai. A picture of an indigenous product made of wood called "RAMUI" for producing yarn is given here:

CARPENTRY

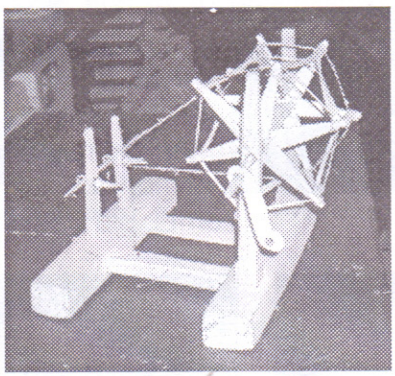
As the Ranglongs were habituated to leading self-sufficient lives since time immemorial, all adult males know certain amount of carpentry works in

their own indigenous ways. They made almost all the articles required for their daily life which included household furniture like weaving materials, utensils, handles of weapons and agricultural implements. They construct houses, granaries and field houses.

Of course their works are not very polished compared to the professional carpenters but very useful in the village community. They could not make any furniture of worth marketable products. The pictures of indigenous products made of wood called Sumpuk and Sarel for husking corn are given here:



SUMPUK & SAREL – For husking corn

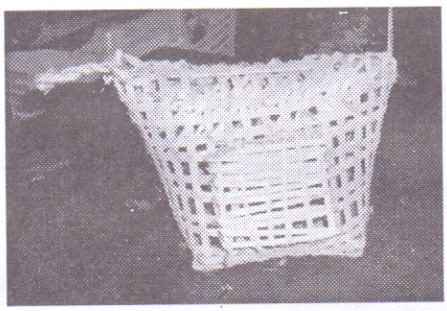


RAMUI – For producing yarn

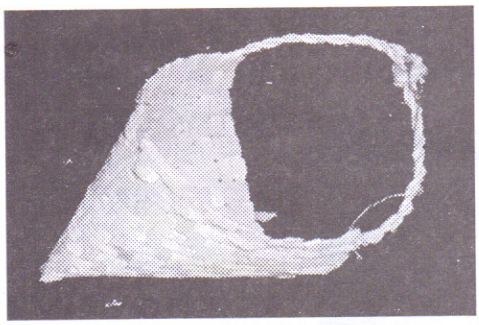
BASKET MAKING

Living in a land where canes and bamboos are plenty, the Ranglongs are naturally experts in using bamboo and cane for making various kinds of baskets and mats. Baskets are commonly known as "Thiam" in Halam language. There are various types, designs and shapes of baskets, found in the Ranglong villages depending on the purpose for which it is used. Baskets are used for carrying paddy, water container, fuel, household goods etc. It is

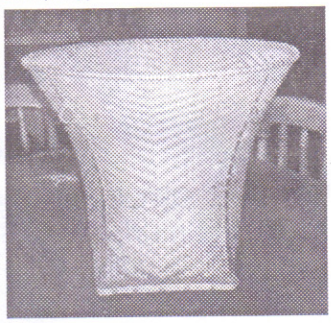
also used as container for storing paddy and for keeping fowls. The raw material for making basket is bamboo and cane. The raw material is collected in the jungles, preferably bamboos which are at least one year old. The bamboo is split into small pieces and the splints smoothened into fine strands. The strand is called "Menang" in the Halam language. With the fine strands, basket of various designs, sizes and shapes are made for household use. It is also bartered for other articles of use. This industry is confined to the menfolks. Some indigenous products from "Menang" are given here:



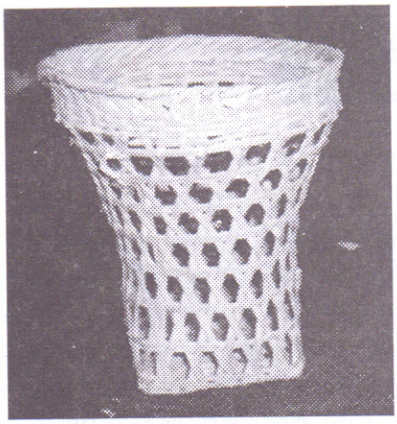
ARBOM – Made of bamboo for keeping fowls (Coop)



CHANGALSOR – Funnel used for kharpani



LONGKHAI – Main basket for both male and female

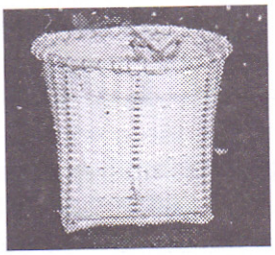


SENGKONG – To carry fuel and water

REL – Indigenous Almirah

NAMRI

TI-UM – Gourd bottle, an indigenous water container



CHEMPAI – Used by male

HUNTING

Since the Ranglongs live in the midst of dense forest, they have become expert in hunting. Hunting is also another process of food gathering. It is not only an economic activity but also a sport. So it is also a favourite hobby of the male members of the society. Women and children of below ten years of age are not allowed to participate. They used to hunt many kinds of animals like tiger, elephant, boar, wild pig, mithun, hares, wolf, deer and birds. The weapons used in hunting are country guns, spears, bows and arrows. Every member must have his own chopper with him.

In addition trap which is termed as "Chang" is also used as another way of hunting. Generally traps are set near the jhum or on the way to water source where the animals come at night to drink water. They used to hunt and kill the wild animals individually and through corporate hunting. Whenever any wild animal is killed while hunting in the jungle, there is a strict system of distribution. The one who shot first even though the hunted animal is not dead is considered as the killer of the animal. For which he gets the head portion along with other general share. If the gun used for hunting is borrowed one, the owner is given equal share along with the hunters. It is said that none should be sent empty handed once they reached the spot of killing least the luck will not favour them in the next hunting expedition. In the past, wild elephant hunting was a big game.

END NOTES

1. Choudhury, Dr. Jayanta : *Shifting Cultivation in Tripura*, p. 58
2. Romai: It is a kind of bamboo which is locally called "Muli". Its scientific name is ***"Melo canna Baccisera"***
3. Liangkhaia Rev. : op. cit., p. 109
4. Ibid. : P. 108
5. Baran Sorkar, Arun : *Modern Geography*, p. 104
6. It is taken from the Deed Copy done on 3 July 1967 in the office of the Sub Registrar at Dharmanagar, Tripura.

On 17 July 1997, the Noagang Market was first regulated by the Damcherra Sub-Zonal Office under the TTAADC Government, Tripura. Noagang is now one of the biggest markets in the TTAADC area.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE RANGLONGS

FAMILY

The institution of family is as old as humanity itself and the most basic and without doubt the first social unit is the family or household. Among the tribes it has been observed that the unit in the family tie is an important integration factor. The traditional Ranglong family is nuclear and exogamous. The Ranglong family is patriarchal by authority, patrilineal by succession and patronymic by descent. Thus property is inherited by all male siblings. Traditionally the ancestral property is given to the youngest son since he has the responsibility of looking after the parents in their old age. Nowadays the property is equally devided among the sons after the death of their father. If the property is shared among the sons, the youngest son will inherit the parental house. However, the parents also can provide a share of their property to the daughters. But providing a share of the ancestral property to the daughters is not a must. The Ranglong family is basically made up of a husband, wife and their unmarried children. The grandfather and grandmother may also happen to be the members of the family. The joint family system is not favoured by the Ranglongs and as such it is not practiced but rarely and only when there is no alternative, that is, because of poverty and physical handicap. The general practice is that as soon as a son marries and becomes the head of his family he goes away with some ancestral property and set up a home of his own. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family and prepares to shoulder much of the responsibility after the death of his father. Inter family links are much noticeable during social functions.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is an institution to satisfy physical, psychological, social, cultural and economic needs of men and women. In all societies, social recognition of mating among their members is arranged through the institution of marriage. Monogamy is the most popular type of marriage found in the Ranglong society. The Ranglong marriage reflects a secular outlook. In the Ranglong society, individuals are relatively free to choose their own mates. A marriage arrangement thus is done without the participation of the parents of the bride and the bridegroom. The boy would select the girl of his choice as his life long partner by means of "Lunkhui"[1] in which the boy helps the girl in combing hair. In general, the boys and girls always felt shy of courting in front of their parents. Traditionally lunkhui is done at night in a very secret way. This offers an occasion for both of them to express their views and to understand each other. If and when the boy and the girl agree for marriage, then the boy has to inform his parents about his desire to marry or

his acceptance to a marriage proposal, suggesting a girl for partnership. This leads to the start of negotiation in which some elderly persons including the guardians of the boy would visit the house of the girl with a marriage proposal. A pot of rice beer is needed here which is generally carried by the male party. This rice beer is called "Chongrakelzu" which means a rice beer for asking. Chongrakelzu is the first step of the Ranglong marriage. If both the parties are consented to the proposal of the marriage, then they proposed the date for the second step of marriage which is termed as "Biakzu". The Ranglong usually used to spend the time of fixing marriage date in a grand scale. They had to prepare and stock pots of rice beer for biakzu. When biakzu, the second step of marriage is conducted, at least two pots of rice beer are needed. On this day, the presence of the society council members such as Kalim, Kabur and Muktiars is a must. No religious rites are performed. The marriage parties used to offer feast and drinks to the community gathered for the function. The Kalim, Kabur and Muktiar of that village had to consume the rice beer first. However, offering feast and drinks to the community gathered is not obligatory. It is not out place to mention here that "Hanot" is compulsorily used in the time of biakzu. It is a kind of handicraft product which is purely made of bamboo. Some small bamboo poles were tied round with the bamboo canes and were put to smoking fire. After sometime, the bamboo poles were taken out from the fire and then the canes were taken off from the poles. The poles became stripped as the uncovered part of the bamboo poles were blackened by the smoke. These stripped bamboo poles were tied up in a bundle of three each. Two bundles were tied up to the centre post of the house and one bundle was tied up at a place where they sat and enjoyed drinking the rice beer. It is used to decorate the house of the girl.

Today, there is a revival of non essential rituals and customs in the Ranglong society which appeared to have become weak. Many parents used to spend a lot of wasteful expenditures on weddings, and there is a tendency among the not so affluent to imitate the affluent. As such, many poor parents are not in a position to spend lavishly on weddings, and hence elopement is the solution for many boys and girls. Eventually the parents welcome the couple's return. Under this system, the bride-price has to be paid to the girl's parents within one month. While paying the price of the bride, the presence of the society leaders is a must as to witness the marriage. This system is termed as "anruk" in Halam language which means abducting the girl on mutual consent but without the knowledge of the girl's parents. It is a marriage in which the conditions causing marital instability are likely to worsen rather than improve in future. What then is the future of marriage?

TYPES OF MARRIAGE

Traditionally, two types of marriage are prevalent among the Ranglong society such as "Lolui" and "Maksa". **Lolui** is the most prevalent practice which is the system of marriage by paying the price of bride in money. At

present, the bridal price is amounting to rupees one thousand and one only. According to the ritual of the Ranglong society, the bridal price had to be put in the copper plate mixed with cotton and rice. However, this should not be mistaken with the dowry system, where the bride has to pay the groom. Traditionally the brothers and sisters of the bride are strongly expected to offer presents to the bride. Their names are supposed to be called in serial to offer their presents by a person who is called "Khazonzi". The presents and things whatever be offered to the bride by her family and relatives are regarded as dowry which is called "Khaipel". When the brothers offered their presents to the bride, in return they had to consume rice beer which is termed as "Chapazu" meaning a rice beer of brother. Today, on the marriage day, whoever attends the marriage function used to offer presents of various items like clothes, ornaments and utensils to the couple. After the accomplishment of the marriage ceremony, the bride may start for her father inlaw's house. Before leaving the parental house of the bride, the couple had to touch the feet of the elderly people in reverence and beg blessings. This is called "Ruai a lak". While touching the feet of the elderly people, the bride had to cover her face with a costly cloth which is called "Ruangtipuansen". The elderly people would bestow their blessings upon the couple by saying these words:

"Khuansiang riti,
Tinsuang kanun,
Haram reng sanu ,
Mamui ase mansa;
Na tuanglam rona ranga,
Thimarang phaiphok chang rase;
Na ranga tunglam phoivel chang rase,
Masu ang tuai va suak ro,
Laimeng ang huang va chui ro;
Mot ang mara va kur ro,
Thunglu vaipar vanchuak ro;
Mankhuk thunglu va rel ro."

MEANING OF THE BLESSINGS

"This is the tradition of our forefathers,
The princes of Haram kingdom,
Who was first sent to her father-inlaw's house;
Let your journey be safety and comfort,
You will be blessed with many children,
You will be fruitful like banana,
Have a long life".

The friends of the bride used to barricade the path with a bamboo through which the couple would pass for their destination. This is called "Buanchi".

Generally this is done by the young boys and girls of the village in order to show their protest through music for taking away their friend from the village. The groom's party also had to reply through music narrating the cause of their mission. The groom's party, if defeated in this musical contest, had to offer some amount of money to them for their drinks. In the case of Lolui system of marriage, at least twelve pots of rice beer is a must. Each rice beer had its name and they are as follows: Zupui – main ricebeer, zurabo – a pair of ricebeer, amanzik – a tail of ricebeer, arok zu – the ricebeer of married males, naitenu zu – the ricebeer of married females, nungak ruathar zu – the ricebeer of youths, ruailakna zu – the ricebeer of seeking blessings, chapa zu – the ricebeer of brothers, zuarpui zu – the ricebeer of sisters, labor zu meaning the ricebeer of songs and paikhai zu. **Maksa** is another system of marriage through personal bondage for two to five years. In this system, the groom had to start living in the house of his wife from the first day of Vatchang tha, the first month of the Ranglong calendar for rendering labour towards the cost of his wife. They are socially permitted and accepted as husband and wife having sexual relationship and procreation. At present it has been observed that this system became almost inactive with the changes in the society. The marriage age for boys and girls is eighteen to twenty years and sixteen to eighteen years respectively. The residence after marriage is patrilocal. Traditionally, there was no marriage symbol for the Ranglong women. Married women do not use vermilion bangles and iron bracelets which are commonly used as a sign of a married woman especially among the neighbouring Hindu communities. In fact, there is no symbolic dress or ornament which can differentiate a married woman from an unmarried one. Recently however, some married women of the Hindu section started using vermilion and conchshell bangles. Remarriage is allowed in the Ranglong society. Individuals are permitted to marry again often on the death of the first spouse or after divorce; but they cannot have more than one spouse at one and the same time. She can marry any bachelor or widowers. There is no bar. She can even marry a person who is younger than her in age. However, when a woman lost her husband, she has to seek permission from her brother for remarriage. The dowry is half of the first marriage. The "Maksa" is not compulsory in case of widow marriage. While inheriting property, the rule of male equigeniture is followed. The leadership of a family is inherited by the eldest male. A girl may inherit her parent's property if she has no brother. Traditionally the Ranglong society has both forbidden and preferable months for marriage. Generally they do not like the dates after full moon. But the dates before and during full moon is preferred. Their most preferred months for marriage are Vatchang and Masai, the months of January and February respectively. The months of Azing and Bualpa, the months of July and December respectively, are forbidden months. They considered Azingtha, [2] the month of June to be bad month for marriage because this month is

considered as dark month. The couple becomes unhappy if they marry in this month.

MARRIAGE CODE

Generally marriage is held within the clan but due to acculturation inter – community marriage among the Ranglong society is also prevalent. The Ranglong society has traditionally prohibited marriage between certain categories of relations. Marriage with particular cross cousins like father's, sister,s or mother's and brother's offsprings, marriage with parallel cousins like child of father's brother and sister or mother's sister and brother are strictly prohibited. If a boy happened to marry his close relative, then he had to pay fine which is termed as "Ralochai". The younger brothers and sisters are also supposed not to over take their elder brothers and sisters in the case of marriage. The trespassers will be fined with a pot of rice beer. It is called "Ukhel".

DIVORCE

Divorce is in vogue in the Ranglong society. The reasons for divorce are several. Either of the spouses can ask for divorce for adultery, barrenness, maladjustment, and such cases are referred to the traditional village court. Sometimes even the slightest hint infidelity leads to divorce. According to the traditional rules, the Ranglong society permits desertation of a wife by a husband with the payment of fine. Normally, the divorcing partner used to pay compensation to the divorcee. If a woman is to be blamed in a divorce, her family returns marriage price which is called "Maktha". The woman is not allowed to take away anything apart from what she is wearing. On the other hand, if the husband is to be blamed he has to return all his wife's belongings and a fine which is called "Maktha". There are no complicated customary laws regarding the guardianship of children in case of a divorce. Children of a divorced couple are expected to stay with their father.

AVOIDANCE AND JOKING RELATIONSHIP

Avoidance is a type of usage through which some restrictions are imposed on close interaction of certain kinsmen. Among the Ranglongs, as a result of such restrictions, certain relatives avoid talking to each other directly, avoid physical contact and maintain minimum social interaction with each other. The relationship between the daughter-in-law and her real or classificatory father-in-law or husband's real or classificatory elder brothers is that of avoidance. She too has relationship of avoidance with her younger sister's husband. They cannot cut jokes with each other. But her relationship with her husband's younger brothers and her elder sister's husband are friendly. They can cut jokes with each other. While a man avoids touching to his younger brother's wife, he has joking relationship with his wife' younger sisters. Father's brothers are given status and respect almost equal to that given to father. If one's father is not alive, he has to take the guidance from his

father's brother. Similarly mother's sisters too are treated with respect as one would treat one's mother.

NAMING OF A NEW CHILD

Every traditional Ranglong person's name bears a meaning of significance. During the delivery time of the child two experienced older women termed as "Kurma" and "Loma" used to attend the woman. They used to help and nurse the pregnant woman during the labour pain. Generally main room of the house is used for delivery purpose. Menfolk are not allowed to enter the area of the delivery room. Hot water is generally used by the Kurma and Loma during the delivery of the child. A sharp bamboo blade termed as "Ngaithim" is used for cutting the naval cord.[3] After that it is tightly tied up with a black thread by three knots. The extra naval cord and the delivery liquids are thrown at a distant place by the Kurma and Loma.

Following the birth of the child, the baby is given a name by the Kurma and Loma. Generally names are given according to the name of the grand father or grand mother. Ranglong names are normally formed of a combination of three syllables. In exceptional cases, the naming of an offspring is derived from the name of a close relatives, a close friend, or someone thought to be worthy of remembrance by the child's parents. At any rate, appropriate and meaningful names are given to the child with the view that the child may live up to the name.

SUPERSTITION AND TABOO

Taboo means prohibition on something that is regarded for religious or other reasons as not to be done, touched, used, speak etc. Like other tribal communities, the Ranglongs are also having some superstitious beliefs which are handed down from their ancestors since so long lapse of time and years. It is taboo for women to eat twin bananas during pregnancy. It is also taboo for women to attend the funeral ceremony of those who died on unnatural death. Women are also restricted from taking bath in streams above men or to entertain male guests in the absence of their husbands. When a person is just about to leave his house for any purpose of work, if someone appears before him with empty vessel, it is then regarded as a bad omen. During the wife's pregnancy, men are restricted from digging any hole on the ground or fill it, fearing that such actions at that stage would affect the child in the womb according to the traditional belief of the Ranglongs. Sitting or standing on the door step or standing by the side of the door with one leg on the door step or whistling by mouth at night could also be bad omens. During menstruation the sacred places could not be visited by the female. The women should not climb up the tree. One should not discharge urine on the way. There is a practice of putting a small stone inside the "ruangtok", a traditional container of rice. The Ranglongs had a traditional belief that by putting the stone inside the ruangtok, sapitenu, the deity of rice would stay in that particular house. Saiansik, making a whistling sound by mouth at night is

strictly prohibited. While harvesting, no one should not make whistling sound. The women folk are also restricted to make whistling sound by mouth at any time. If an owl enters a house, then it is regarded the house unclean. To clean the house, the owner should call the ochai to offer sacrifice. It is a traditional belief of the Ranglongs that while burning the jhum, if a python happens to live in the burnt jhum then it can fly from the earth to the heaven to escape from the heat of fire. In such a situation, it is said that the python had to fight with the fire and a loud noice is heard.

THE WITCH

The witches are those who practice divination with the assistance of evil spirits. They counteract the evil magical influence with their stronger magical power. The witches are thought to be able to do extra ordinary things which are beyond the capabilities of ordinary human beings. They are capable of travelling great distance. They also have the capability of turning themselves into animals or go out as an invisible spirit and of killing victim or send out their spirit while their body remains at home. The witch is believed to eat the internal organs of another person or animal, such as liver, heart, lungs etc. The victim suffers from untold miseries and dies. When the spirit of the witch enters another person, the victim speaks in the voice of the witch. Thus the family of the victim could make out who the witch was by recognizing the voice. Witchcraft could be hereditary and the practice is passed one from generation to generation but it could also be learned from an accomplished witch. However, they practice the art in secret. They are believed to have links with unknown spirits, demons or ghost of those who had died of unnatural death, such as suicide, or being killed by wild animals. The evil spirits teaches them the use of black art, including the use of poisonous herbs and substances.

The witches are believed to take the form of a cat and enter the house of the enemy at night. They clipped on their beds and lick them. Such a person is suspposed to get seriously ill and may ultimately die. Witches are traditionally detected by the ochais, and when detected are always punished and expelled from the village.

DREAMS

The tribals are great belivers of dreams. It is believed that the supernatural forces communicate with the living human beings through dreams. While Sleeping, it was believed that the human soul wanders with the spirits of their ancestors or other supernatural spirits. While wandering with them, they convey to them of the impending dangers and also the blessings that are to come in the future. Thus, dreams are taken seriously. There are good dreams and bad dreams. If a person dreams of falling off a tree or wearing black clothes it indicates illness or death. To dream of a serpant and fire are also considered as a sign of bad omen. To dream of red also symbolizes danger. If a person dreams of naked it indicates bad day.

THE SOCIAL POSITION OF THE RANGLONG WOMEN

Human life is full of problems. There are certain problems which are faced both by men and women. But there are a few problems which are faced exclusively by women because of gender discrimination prevalent in all societies. When we talk about the social position of the Ranglong women, it is almost the same of other tribal communities. A woman was supposed to confine at home and her primary responsibility was to bear children and ensure the continuity of the family lineage. A woman was kept constantly under male control and lost her right to seek knowledge. Women generally used to perform kitchen work, childcare and other domestic chores. At one time the Ranglong parents would not send their daughters to schools. The argument is that the girl takes away family resources when she moves to another family upon marriage. As such the fact, the female literacy percentage is comparatively much lower than its counterpart male in the Ranglong society. Family resources are not equally distributed between sons and daughters. Marriage and motherhood are prescribed as the ultimate goals for daughters. The family is thus the first source of discrimination. It is in the family that daughters and sons are socialized for playing different roles in the society. Today, the Ranglong women play a significant economic role in the society. In social affairs also their role is no less important than that of the males. Besides the usual household works, the Ranglong women participate in agricultural activities, animal husbandry, collection of fuel, collection of vegetables from the jungles, bringing of potable water, marketing and in different socio-economic activities. Weaving and brewing are two common fields totally controlled by the Ranglong women. They also play a major role in rice production, particularly in sowing, transplanting, harvesting and processing. In a word we can say that the women are the backbone of the society. Interestingly nowadays the girls are attending schools and colleges. It should be noted that the Ranglong girls are now working as Assistant Professors in the colleges, and even now studying in the medical colleges. Many of the Ranglong girls are now rubbing shoulders with the boys in different socio-economic activities. In the socio economic affairs, now the Ranglong girls are gaining ground in the society. In the religious sphere, however, they are not treated as equals and no women can officiate as a priest. In the political field also, the Ranglong women are now rising as to have impact. On the whole, the women are now the backbone of the society.

FOOD HABIT

Rice is the staple food of the Ranglong society. They take rice three times in a day. In the morning they prepare food and go for work after having food. It is called "Zingbu" which means morning food. Again they take rice at noon, and the last meal is taken in the evening. Generally the Ranglongs do not eat food at night. They like rice with "Anramung". It is a special preparation of curry generally prepared in a piece of bamboo. It is prepared with

vegetables and fermented fish with spices like chillis, turmeric and ginger, fish or meat. Anramung is more delicacy than the curries cooked in any pan. The Ranglongs are non-vegetarian, and therefore they are very fond of pork. The other ideal food of Ranglong is "Changal" which means kharpani in Bengali.[4] They are not fond of eating rough and double boiled rice. They are fond of eating fine rice. While going to work in the morning they carry with them riceballs packed in leaves of banana. The riceballs are termed as "Busun". At noon they take this busun. The leaves of banana or "Nathial" are used for the purpose of dishes. They use the husk of the dried bottle gourd as vessels for drinking water. This water container is termed as "Ti-um". Nowadays the utensils of aluminum have replaced the old traditional utensils in the household of the Ranglong society.

SALT

Since the Ranglongs were isolated from the marketing system in the past, they did not use the common salt. They produced salt in the primitive way. There are springs in the forest having saline water which is termed as "Si". The water of Si is generally liked by the wild animals. The Si is collected and boiled to get the residual salt. Nowadays, of course they purchase common salt from the market.

CHANGAL

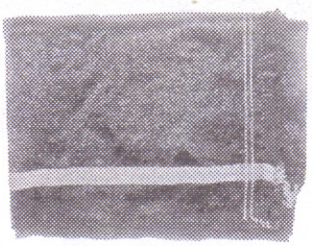
They used to prepare alkalined water for preparing curry soup. Some tender bamboos are burnt and the ashes are collected. The burnt ashes are put in the bamboo jar called "Changalsor". The changalsor is hanged from a higher place and a pot is placed under the changalsor. Some water is poured into the jar where the ashes are already put for filtration. The filtered water becomes alkalined and is termed as "Changal". It is used for preparing curry in a small quantity. It is also used for washing clothes.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

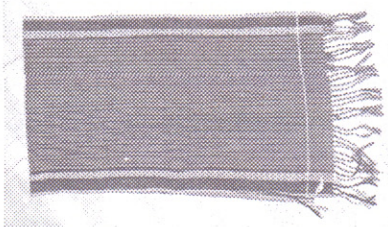
Like any other tribal people, the Ranglongs also have a typical dress of their own. In the past, the Ranglong men and women wear a short piece of cloth wrapped round their waists and hanging upto the knees. Nikni is the dress for the lower body of the females, and duti is the dress for the lower body of the males. Nikni is black and duti is white in colour. Risa is used to cover the upper body of the females. Risa is combination of yarns of different colours. Puannai is a piece of cloth by means of which the kids are hanged from the neck of mother. The Ranglong people made their traditional dresses by themselves. However, due to the long contact with plain people and change of habitation their dresses undergo certain changes where there are some elements of imitation. A coarse cloth called "RiemKultai"[5] is generally worn while working in the jhum or field. The other is a kind of long cloth called "Duti" is tied around the waist for covering the lower body of the males. Another small cloth called "Kamsa" is placing on their heads and this is sometimes conveniently used as a pillow while in bed. Generally the dress of

the male folk is simple. Since the Ranglongs as a whole are dwelling in the warm plain areas, they do not wear much clothes during day time. All these clothes are woven and stitched by the women in their own indigenous way. The women wear a short shirt which hardly covers their chest below. The shirt is usually with full sleeve.

They call it "Khemachi". A dark cloth called "Nikni" with a stripe design at the ridge is tied at the upper part of the breast which is broad enough to cover the lower part of the body upto just beneath the knee. In order to prevent the nikni from falling and loosening another small cloth is tied around the ridge of the upper part. This cloth is called "Kongkhit". Like their male counterpart the women also have working dress which are stitched and designed like that of their usual dresses. They used to wear new dresses during the time of social festivals such as Chamer, Dosora and other festivals. The Ranglong women are very fond of ornaments. They used different metallic articles to decorate their bodies. The ear is decorated with various kinds of ornaments. The upper lobe of the ear is hollowed out and a ring made of silver or copper or iron metal called "Benchi" is inserted, and on the lower side "Kuarbet" is fitted. Benchi is made in such a way that flowers can be tucked in ti. Kuarbet, which lies on the lower lobe of the ear, is a hollow round metal of about one and a half to two inches diameter. At the ridge is firmly fitted a small ring like metal called "Kuarkai". So all these pieces of ear ornaments are available in the market and its complete set is worth about ten thousand if it is silver. Generally the well to do families use silver made ear ornaments. They also like various kinds of necklaces. Some of the necklaces used by the Ranglong women are Maduli, Mohonmala, Sumri and Chondorhal which are made of silver. These are very costly necklaces, and are used only by the well to do families.



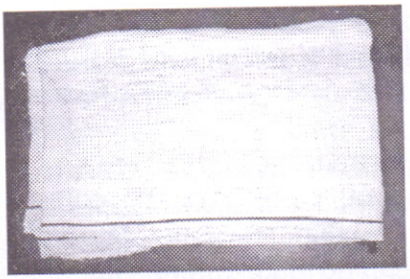
RANGLONG FEMALE CULTURAL DRESS – NIKNI AMDUM



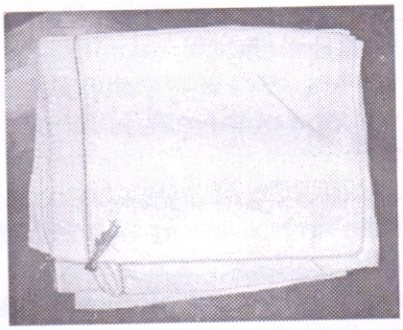
RANGLONG FEMALE CULTURAL DRESS – RISA

RANGLONG MALE CULTURAL DRESS – KAMSA

RANGLONG FEMALE CULTURAL DRESS



RANGLONG CULTURAL BLANKET – PATZONPUAN



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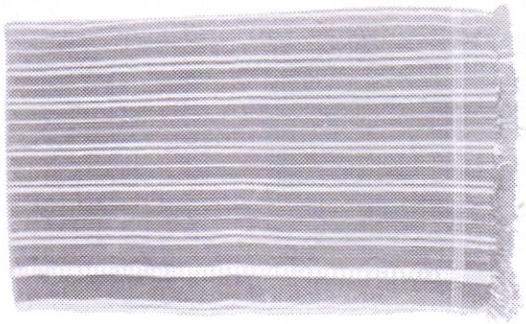


RANGLONG CULTURAL – ZANI

DYEING

The Ranglongs are colourful people. They are very fond of using variety of coloured clothes and dresses. Two variety of coloured cotton are produced in the jhum. One is white while the other one is slightly reddish. As the Ranglong people know only to prepare black colour, they usually used reddish thread with white and black threads to make clothings. They used to grow a kind of plant which they called "Ramua" in the jhum. The leaves of this plant are collected and kept in an earthern jar with water. The leaves are allowed to soak in the water for the night. In the next morning they add an adequate quantity of Changal to this mixture. Now the mixture is ready and the white threads are dipped in this solution to get the black. Now the bark of the Thingphak is boiled with water and the black coloured threads are again dipped in the solution to make the colour permanent. The yellow dye is prepared from the roots of the "Ralum".[6] It is a kind of plant having reddish colour of roots. The bark of the plant is first removed and then the root is chopped into chips. This is boiled in water and the thread is slowly dipped into the boiling mass and allowed to boil for sometime. The thread is then taken out and dried.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The Ranglongs have different kinds of musical instruments for different occasions. They love music and they enjoy singing whenever social functions are performed. One could sing even when doing some work alone. This shows that there is a natural and inborn tendency to express their feelings of joy and happiness in humming and singing. Some of their most common and important instruments are as follows:

KHUANG

Drum is termed as Khuang in Halam language. It is a kind of drum made of wood and animal skin, mostly deer skin is preferable but sometime goat-skin is also used. This instrument is used during festivals and on the death. It is strictly prohibited in using the khuang at any time by any one. It is only used during the time of religious festival and on the death. The Ochais used to mention the name of khuang as "Birbongsing" in their chanting prayer.

DIGIRI

It is a kind of small drum beating alongwith the big drum which is made of wood and animal skin. It is never beaten alone. It is mentioned as "Tanbongsing" by the Ochais in their chanting prayer.

ROSEM

It is a kind of flute made from a hollowed gourd with cane reeds serving as pipes. Today rosem is not known by the young generations and is merely a tale of the past to them.

THEILIA

The flute is termed as "Theilia" in the Ranglong dialect. It is played only

by men. It is made of bamboo, normally, a special kind of bamboo known as "Ronal" and "Romai" would be preferred for this purpose. It will have eight holes for the fingers, and one opening for the mouth. It is usually used during festivals and on the death.

THEIPIT

It is a whistle, normally used by the young boys and girls during their games. It is simply little bamboo tube stopped by the node at one end, and blown as one blown a key.

DANGDUL

It is an instrument made of three flat iron string which coverage at a point and extent further about six inches appearing as a handle. It is a stringed instrument which is held in the mouth and played with the index finger on the right hand.

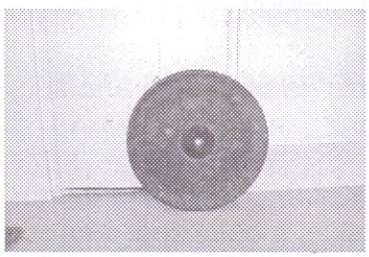
CHONGPERENG

It is a borrowed instrument which is also called Saranda. It is made of wood and has just one string. It is played with another string attatced to both the ends of a stick.

DAR

It is an instrument made of bronze. It is also a borrowed instrument from the neighbouring tribes.

ZAMLUAG



ZAMLUANG

It is also one of the borrowed instruments from the neighbouring tribes. Traditionally when someone is dead, this instrument is used to inform the villagers and the nearby villages about the news of the dead. It is usually beaten at the centre point to make sound.

DISPOSAL OF DEAD BODY

The Ranglongs used to keep the dead body inside the house, not outside the residing house. The neighbours and relatives are informed about the demise. The dead body is first bathed with warm water and dressed in new cloth. A good number of fruits and food which the person likes when he or she was alive are kept at the feet of the deceased. Traditionally the dying person was attended by all the elderly persons of the locality, and continuos dance is done around the dead body by turn at least for one night when the dancers and all other drink adequately. There after the aged persons prepare

stretcher with bamboo to carry the dead body. They call the stretcher as "Tolai" in Halam language. A bottle of liquor is offered in the name of tolai which will be consumed by the makers of tolai only. The tolai is carried by the sons, son-in-laws and relatives of the deceased. The head side of the deceased in the tolai is carried out of the house first. The ochai led the funeral party by throwing cotton and rice all along the way for purifying the path. The place of cremation which is called "Than" in Halam language is generally situated near a river in the western side of the village. When the funeral party reaches the place of cremation, they put the dead body on the pyre for burning. According to the traditional Hindu custom, the Ranglong society used to burn the dead body in case of adult and buried if it be that of child twelve months of age. Then they set fire to the pyre at the headside of the deceased and walk around the pyre and touch the pyre with the burning stick three times. After cremation, the bone of the forehead is collected and placed it in a small boat which is allowed to float in the stream. Then the sons of the deceased declare the date of shradha which is called "sakdar". They erect a small platform for offering food to the deceased soul. One dish is given in the name of the deceased person, another for a person who died previously having the same name of the present deceased persons and another for Samthuraja. They think that the deceased persons will fight with each other for their share of food. Hence they offer a dish to Samthuraja which would cease them from fighting. For every relative who died earlier they offer water in a bamboo pipe and wine in another bamboo pipe. They place a turban in each dish they offer to their deceased relative.

They burn resin in a pot and sing farewell song along with flute. It is worth to mention that the funeral party must take bath before entering their house. In the case of Christians, the dead body is kept inside the coffin and buried their dead in the burial place.

INDIGENOUS GAMES

The Ranglongs have a few indigenous games which are quite similar with that of other Halam tribes. Nowadays as they come in contact with sophisticated games and sports, indigenous games are not practiced widely by the people of the Ranglong society. But previously when there were no schools in the Ranglong areas, the villagers including boys and girls used to play or practice some indigenous games. Some of the indigenous games which are practiced in the past are given here.

TUANG

It is a spinning top which has been played exclusively by young boys.

KEK

It is a special game for the girls. Even the married women take part in it. It is played by the seed of a plant name as 'Kek' in Halam language.

KHUKPUISEKHUK

This is a kind of race exclusively for girls. A player kneels and hops

from one place to another picking up a small piece of bamboo or stick. Those who put more sticks within the regulated time are winner.

KIVA LE BETA

This is a running race between two people. While running the spectators shout saying 'Bet kula kul but kunang' which means that ran faster?

SAKORKE

Stilts are used by the Ranglong boys for sports. It is made of bamboo in indigenous way. The literal meaning of "Sakorke" is the leg of horse.

ASEK ANKEI

This is a tug of war but the art of playing is somehow different. Among the girls the strongest one is selected and so is among the boys. The girl takes her position sitting on the ground with both legs straight while the boy keeps standing. Both pull the rope.

ROTUANANSON

This is one of the most popular games in the Ranglong society. It is an individual as well as a group game like tug of war today. The only difference is that in place of a rope a bamboo is used. A bamboo is placed in the middle of the field having its midpoint at a marked point. Two parties hold the bamboo from two ends. With the signal of the referee each party try to exert force to push the bamboo to the opposite direction. When one party succeeds in crossing the midpoint by pushing the bamboo is declared as the winner. This is generally played mostly by male members, sometimes female members also used to participate.

MASUIANBUAN

It is also a dual combat. Two contending candidates sit face to face and place elbow of their right hand on the ground with the left hand over their back. One holds the right hand of the other tightly and applies all his strength to make the hand of the opponent touch the ground. He who succeeds is declared as winner.

BESUTANKEI

A bamboo is given the shape of a ring by twisting it. The ring is then covered nicely with clothes. Now two contending candidates will stand face to face holding the ring in their hands. The circumference of the ring becomes about 7" – 8". With the signal of the referee the players will pull the ring towards their own side. He who succeeds is declared as the winner of the game. Females can also participate in this game either as an individual or double or mixed double.

SUMPUKATHUAN

The mortar for husking corn is prepared from a long about 20" long with 12" diameter having curved pit in the middle so that pastle can enter it. In this game a contestant is asked to pull the sumpuk up by one sudden snatch

gripping with one hand. He who succeeds in lifting it to a higher level over head is declared as winner.

CORPORATE LABOUR

Lom is an important Ranglong social organization. It is a vocabulary in the Halam language, literally meaning "team work" or "corporate labour". Lom is comprised of youth, both male and female members of each household in the village. The members of lom used to work in each other's fields in rotation regardless of the capability of each individual. It is a collective social service aimed at developing a sense of responsibility among the youth. It is an important institution around which revolved the socio-economic life in the village. A set code of conduct prevailed and whoever violated them bore the brunt of the members. Lom-Ulian, the leader is the main functionary of lom, whose duty is to maintain discipline among the members. His permission must be obtained if any new member is to be admitted in the lom. The young members of lom are usually assigned the duties of supplying water and preparing meal at noon. The main objective of lom is to bring economic development in the village by working together in the jhums or fields on a rotational basis. Lom is also served as the training centre for the youths to learn methods of cultivation, acquire the habits of charity so as to extend help to the needy, the destitute and widows in the village. The institution also acted as an agency for reforming character, motivating them in the art and spirit of teamwork and making them responsible and disciplined persons whose characters are moulded by the qualities of lom.

INDIGENOUS HERBAL MEDICINE AND HEALING

Like other tribal people of the state, the Ranglongs had been using herbal medicines for treatment of illness, wounds, injuries and the like. But most of the antidote for various illnesses is connected with magic-religious beliefs and propitiations of the supernatural beings and spirits. In the past as there was no any dispensary or hospital in the vicinity of their habitations in the dense forest, they had no other alternative but to abide by the advice of the indigenous physician of their society who was popularly known as "Ochai".[7]

They believe both natural and super natural causes of illness. Sacrifices are performed to appease them with different kinds of animals. And at last they take resort to herbal treatment when the disease was not cured by magical activities. Traditional methods of healing by using indigenous herbal medicines are briefly discussed as under:

1.**COUGH AND COLD – BURKHU**

(a) Extract of Basil leaves.

(b) Extract from Myrobalam (Surlu).

2. **ASTHMA – PHUKANSAM**

Extract from the "Ansa" leaves, a jhum grown crop, is advised to be taken orally.

3. **CHOLERA – VONNA**

Extract from "Malephak" leaves is prescribed to be taken

4. **POX – ANTHIMTE**

The leaves of "Anrakhat", "Lukhaterang" and "Rangmairialkha" are boiled in water. The patient is advised to take bath with that water.

6. **SNAKE BITE – MARUL ACHUK**

A knot is given with a trip of cloth tightly just above injured place.

7. **FRACTURE OF BONE – RUKIAK**

Chol is soaked with water and made paste over the spot. This paste in warm condition is used as a plaster with Lepol leaves.

8. **CUT – APOP**

To stop bleeding the sap of the leaves of Chiakmarimsia is advised to apply over the spot. The sap of wild banana plant and Urine therapy is also used.

9. **JAUNDICE – MATHIN-ALIAN**

The patient is advised to take sugarcane and the flower of wild banana as much as possible. The patient is also advised to take bath with boiled water with Neem leaves.

10. **TOOTHACHE – HANA**

The patient advised to keep the root of "Ansa" in the affected area of the teeth. The patient is also advised to brush the teeth with burnt tobacco.

12. **DYSENTRY – EKSEN**

The patient is advised to take the leaves of Perup and Sobiri.

13. **BURNS – AKANG**

In order to heal burns fresh cow dung is applied on it.

14. **EYE PAIN – MITANA**

A little quantity of locally manufactured salt dissolved water is applied. Mother's milk is considered best for eye injuries or diseases.

END NOTES

1. Lunkhui – Traditionally the Ranglong boys used to roam at night and help the girls in combing hair. It is called Lunkhui.
2. Azingtha – Generally July is regarded as Azingtha in Halam language, the sky is always over cast being rainy season. So they call it dark month.
3. Goswami, Dr. D.N. : *The Ranglongs of Tripura*, p. 30
4. Ibid. p. 28
5. RiemKultai – It is an indigenous traditional dress of the Ranglong males.
6. Ralum –It is a kind of plant having reddish colour of roots. On the other hand, the Ranglongs afraid ralum as they think that it can cause to paralysis.
7. Ochai – It means priest. There are two types of Ochai namely "Ochai" and "Deari".

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION

Religion is concerned with the shared beliefs and practices of human beings. It is the human response to those elements in the life and environment of mankind which are beyond their ordinary comprehension. Most religions deal with the attempt of human beings to understand something or some power which is supernatural and suprasensory. It is pre-eminently social and is found in nearly all societies. Religion has also been characterized as that aspect of human social and personal life which embodies the most sublime of human aspirations. It is the foundation on which the normative structure of society stands. Religion has led to the unification of the members of a society. Most of the tribal people have their own tribal customs and beliefs, but in the broader sense of religion they are believed to be the followers of Hinduism. The Lushais, the Darlongs and most of the Halams and the Garos now embraced Christianity.

The religion of the Ranglongs is the same as that of the other animistic tribes in the North East India. In the past, the Ranglong tribe used to believe in the supreme God generally called "pathian"[1] which regulates the life and soul of all human beings. But they also believed in the existence of many spirits which must always be propitiated. They always used to make their sacrifices to the particular bad spirits to whose influence any particular misfortune is supposed to be due. Those Ranglongs who still retain the indigenous belief now call themselves Hindus with retaining much of their old animistic worship. It seems that the original belief of the Ranglongs has been intermingled with the beliefs of their neighbouring communities. Their religion is a curious mixture of animism and Hinduism. They used to try to please the deities by offering sacrifices of animals. They also used to worship side by side with those of the Hindus by their own tribal priests. As was mentioned earlier, the Ranglongs used to worship a good number of spirits by way of performing various sacrifices. It is not known how and when exactly the Ranglongs came under the influence of Hinduism. They have been following a number of traditional religious rites along with some Hindu religious activities.They used to worship some of the deities of Hindus like Durga, Kali and Lakhmi. Mention may be made here that the Ranglongs do not use the idols when they worship those deities of the Hindus. The Ranglongs are also river worshippers. They used to worship nearby rivers every year by offering animals. One of the important rivers that the Ranglongs used to worship is the river Barak. As was stated earlier that the Ranglongs call the river Barak as "Tiruang", and they regard themselves as to be the children of that river. They thought that the deity of river Tiruang is

the most powerful and supreme than any other deities. Worshipping the river Tiruang is an important event in their religious life. The worship of Tiruang river takes place once at an interval of every four or five years in the form of a community festival with subscriptions being raised and enthusiastic participation of the people. The worship of Tiruang river is a great occasion for the Ranglongs where a large number of goats, ducks, fowls and bisons are sacrificed and offered to this river. This puja generally ends with a community meeting where matters of importance to the community are raised and deliberated upon. While worshiping the river Tiruang, it was not a must for them to go to the spot of the river.

As was stated earlier, the Ranglongs believe that the destiny of the universe is in the hand of one God who is known as "Pathian", the creator of human beings and the universe. This God has full power over human beings. The Ranglongs are the followers of only two religions – Hinduism and Christianity. It is not out of place to mention here that at this more than 95% of the total population of the Ranglongs haved embraced Christianity. The rest 05% are still following the ancient and rituals of their forefathers.

There are some festivals and pujas which are performed by the Ranglongs during different months of the year from time immemorial and thus festivals and pujas become part and parcel of their cultural heritage. Traditionally, the Ranglongs have forbidden months and days for perfoming sacrifice. They do not like the days after full moon of a month. During the menstruation period of the women, they generally do not like to perform sacrifice.

Of the various important deities, the following may be cited:

RODONNGAI

They are the most powerful and strongest deities. They are believed to be the kings of the east. They are also known as "Sukundrai" and "Bukundrai".[2] Traditionally they worshipped by offering a pair of cocks of white colour.

CHEMRATNGAI

These are the deities of the northern area. Hence the worship of these deities would be done facing northern direction. It is believed that these deities are watching the individuals all the time. They were named as "Golarai" and "Kalarai".[3] They are usually worshipped by offering a pair of goats.

SUNROLPUNGAI

It is believed that these Gods are acting like a spy. They were named as "Zomdugal" and "Zudugal".[4] They used to worship these Gods by offering a pair of cocks.

TARPA

It is believed that this deity is the owner of all kinds of medicines. He is named as "Bommali Raja". A hen is offered to propitiate this deity.

TI PATHIAN

It is believed that the deity of water is one of the most powerful and strongest one. Traditionally the Halamasa is prohibited to worship any other deities except the deity of water.

TANG TARPA

It is the spirit of mountain and land. This is regarded as one of the greatest spirits.

TI TARPA

This spirit is, on the other hand, controller of water. It is regarded to be an evil spirit. It is usually worshipped just before taking bath.

IN PUMANGAI

Its literal meaning is the owners of the house. These deities are said to be taking care of the village. They are invoked in time of sickness. They are believed to be concerned of the family members of each village.

NA NU

It is the mother deity. When it is worshipped by offering a wild bison, the Barak river is regarded as the mother deity. And when it is worshipped by offering a domestic buffalow, the Durga is regarded as the mother deity. It is the mother deity who stands for love and compassion for the whole community.

NA PA

It is the father deity. The Ranglongs used to wordhip this deity in two ways. When it is worshipped at the river, the Brahmaputra is regarded as the fatherGod. And when it is worshipped on the land, Shiva is regarded as the father deity. It is paternal deity who protects the human race and the community from going astray.

SAPITE

It is the deity of wealth. It is generally believed that the deity is female and regarded as the owner of rice. Generally the sacrifice is offered individually or corporately. If it is worshipped by the Sagornal or Khozobak districts, then they used to offer the sacrifice of buffalow which is also termed as Sethat. If it is worshipped individually then the sacrifice of pigs is offered. The well to do family used to perform this sacrifice individually.

PATPITE

It is generally believed that the deity is female and regarded as the owner of cotton. Those who pursue any kind of studies would invoke this deity.

BONGRAI

Its literal meaning is wind. It is the deity who has power over wind and storm. When cyclonic storm hits the houses and plantations, people turn to this deity in prayer.

SACRIFICE

Since they believed in the existence of invisible Supreme Being or

spirit, worshiping was done by way of performing various sacrifices. From the time Immemorial, these sacrifices are believed to have been performed by them. About the origin of these sacrifices, some myths are current among the Ranglong community. According to one such myth, once there lived a poor ailing person named Sanareisa. As he was suffering from harmful diseases, the villagers felt disgusted and afraid of him for his disease. To avoid the outbreak of the disease in him, they took him to one of the jhum house, away from the village. When the Maharaja of Tripura came to know about this helpless dyoing man, he felt pity on him. He sent two police men with some medicines to save the life of that ailing poor fellow. When the policemen arrived at the jhum house they gave him the medicines and applied to his sores.

As a result, Sanareisa recovered from his ailment. He was very glad to the two policemen. As a token of love and thank, he offered them meat of wild hen and some beer. When the news of this miraculous recovery spread to the villagers, they asked him how it all happened. Sanareisa told them that while he was fighting for his life alone in the jhum house, two persons namely Kalarai and Golarai came and gave him treatment. In return of their services and as a token of thanks he offered them two legs of wild hen and some beer. Since hearing this miraculous recovery, the Ranglong community began to perform various kinds of sacrifices. It is not known how Sanareisa got a wild hen while lying on his sick bed. But since then wild hen play a very important part in all sacrifices and the cage in which the wild hen was kept by Sanareisa is called "Bengkhep".[5] Wild hen is supposed to be very useful for every sacrificial offerings, but now, it has become rare and not available as and when required. So they used domestic fowl in place of wild hen. However, the fowl is to be first kept in bengkhep, so that it is regarded as a wild hen. Some of these are given here:

TOKSAREI

It is usually performed in order to cure the patient. Animals required to be killed are five to seven small fowls. Six pieces of bamboo which are made fluffy with stripped design are fixed to the ground. Upon these bamboos, leaves are spreaded where they put some rice. Then the Ochai killed the fowls and its blood is poured over the rice. The meat of the fowls are consumed by the Ochai and his attendants.

APUIASANG

It is a real sacrifice performed to propitiate the gods which are believed to cause illness to persons. This sacrifice Apuiasang is performed for only illness of serious nature. Requirements of expenditure are also burdensome. Two he goats for Chemratngai, one pig for Sunrolpungai, one pig for Tarpa, four fowls and an egg are required. In addition, three pots of rice beer are also required. The meat of these animals are consumed by the whole villagers. However, it is the tradition of the Ranglong society that the better parts of the meat are usually consumed by the Ochai and leaders of the village.

KUMHUIZANDOI

This sacrifice is generally performed by the well to do family once in a year. Two red cocks are offered for this sacrifice. With a view to keeping the family healthy and wealthy, they used to perform this sacrifice. Traditionally it is a must to invite all the neighbours to participate the function.

ALOMNGAI

It is the deities of the females. Particularly at the time of pregnancy, the husband is supposed to offer sacrifice to these deities for the normal delivery of his wife.

BAREI NGAI

These deities are Kept in a hut outside the village. In that hut seven pieces of stones are kept. It is believed that these deities protect the village and are considered as the deities of the youths and remain with them all the time. The youths of the village offer sacrifice once or twice in a year.

The Ochai used to offer the sacrifice with fifteen fowls and a goat. The youngmen used to meet their lovers in the specified hut at night when the girls wait near a burning oven. They thought that these deities protect them.

SIMBAK

Simbak is a kind of rack made of bamboos which is usually used for keeping clothes and other things. But simbak is regarded as a deity who protects the house. They do not consume the first fruit of their jhum without offering it to the simbak. This tradition is never broken. After harvesting the crops of the jhum, first of all they used to keep each variety in simbak. There after they used to start consuming the new crops.

DOSORA

Once in a year the villagers used to perform Dosora on corporate basis. The dosora festival is mainly performed by the villagers in order to worship the deity Durga. Unlike the plain people, no image of deity is placed in the function while worshipping the deity Durga. Historically it is believed that the Ranglongs had practiced the sacrifice of Durga after only they got largely influenced of the plain people. They used to raise subscriptions for the sacrifice from each household equally. The collector of subscription is called "Teitun". The word "Dosora" itself is also not a native word but foreign.

NEINEKNU

Neineknu is "Laxmi Puja" which is performed just after the sacrifice of Dosora is done. No image of deity is required for this sacrifice. Most probably this sacrifice is also adopted from the plain communities.

KALIPUJA

Ochai used to offer sacrifice with a black colour of he-goat. When Kalipuja is performed by the villagers, it is not done in the village but outside the gate of the village. No children and women are allowed to participate in this sacrifice. The sacrificial meat should not be brought back to home. It has to be consumed all by the participants of the puja.

ABUR ANZOK

When a baby is born to a family, the sacrifice which is known as "Abur anzok" is compulsorily performed by the parents of the baby. In the case of a boy then the sacrifice is performed after seven days from the birth of the baby, and if a girl then it is performed after five days. The sacrifice is generally performed by an old woman or the ochai. It is usually done in the morning near the well or somewhere outside the village in which five eggs are offered. There is a saying: *"Sunga sanai bur sului"* which run the meaning as "The baby in the womb is unclean".

PARSEN APEI

This sacrifice is done for the welfare of the children when they are two to three months old. Traditionally it is done in the morning near the water point or somewhere outside the village. Two red cocks and a hen are usually offered to this sacrifice.

Besides this, the following ingredients are also needed: a cradle, two small pieces of cloth, a spinning top and a kek. If the baby is a boy for whom the sacrifice is performed, a spinning top which is known as Tuang, and if a girl then a Kek is a must.

After accomplishing the sacrifice, then they used to enjoy with meat and heavy drinks at night till the stars appeared in the sky. This sacrifice is also termed as "Khumkhok Anpei".

LAIBUN

Laibun the last ritual related with the infant stage. Kith and kin are invited, and a sumptuous meal, as per the traditional custom of the Ranglong is served.

OCHAI

The priest is called "Ochai" in Halam language. In the past, the priesthood is considered to be hereditary and belonged to the priestly clan. Although there was no caste division in the Ranglong society, Sanghuipu and Tansurai were the clans of the priesthood called Chuantai. The Tripuris call "Chantai". According to S.B.K. Dev Varman, the Chuantais were brought by Triluchan, the king of Tripura, from the Sagar Island in the Sundarbans.[6] It has been generally believed that the chuantais were brought to the Ranglong land by the king. So from the time immemorial the Ranglongs used to call the chuantais as "Tang Kor".[7] which mean "Hill Bengali". Nowadays, being conscious of the transcendence of the divinity and the importance of offering sacrifices to the deities for the welfare of the people, one comes forward voluntarily to serve the community as Ochai. Normally a priest belongs to any clan of the community can perform various kinds of sacrifices. But in the case of killing the bison, the chuantais must perform the function of sacrifice. The priest belongs to the priestly clan of Sanghuipu must stand and offer the sacrifice. The sacrificial animals also must be slain by the person belonging to the clan of Tansurai. The Ochai performs all kinds of important ceremonies of

the village. He enjoys a highly respected position in the village. He used to get gifts from the people during religious ceremonies. In the times of sickness and misfortunes, the Ochai is sought after because it is believed that he alone could placate the deities by offering sacrifices and thereby bring about good health and fortunes. The Ochais have developed a technical language of their own which is unintelligible to the rest of the people.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Festivals are joyful celebration in which feasting, music, dance and play are common all over the world. But among the Ranglongs, it conveys much deeper and significant meaning. To the Ranglongs, festival means agricultural season of feasting of meat and rice beer, acompanied by songs and colourful dances. The Ranglong tribe has got a number of religious for almost throughout the year. Some of the important Ranglong religious festivals are described here.

THE KILLING OF BISON

Since the Ranglongs believed in the existence of invisible supreme being or spirit, worshipping were done by way of performing various sacrifices. The literal meaning of "Sethat" is killing bison. It is a kind of animistic worship that the Ranglong community used to practice offering sacrifice of wild bison.

It is said that before their migration to Syhlet province and Tripura, their forefathers used to perform the sacrifice called "Sethat" by offering wild bison in order to propitiate the deity of the river Tiruang. The river Barak of Assam is still known as "Tiruang" by the Ranglongs, and they regard themselves as to be the children of this river. They believed that the deity of river Tiruang is the most powerful and supreme than those deities they used to worship. They used to worship the river Tiruang once in every four or five years interval by offering animals like bison and goats. The sacrifice of Sethat is not performed by either individual or a particular village. It is the only sacrifice performed by the whole community of the Ranglong collectively. It is a must for every clan of the community to witness the sacrifice.

Every clan of the community should bring he-goat each to offer in this sacrifice for seeking blessings for the particular clan from the deity of the river Tiruang. As was stated earlier, the whole province of the Ranglong is divided into three districts such as Khopui, Khozobak and Sagornal. The council consisted of the three districts is called "Parual Anthum", which literal meaning is "Three Brothers". The Sethat which is performed by the three districts of the Ranglong territory is called "Parual Anthum Sethat". It is a corporate sacrifice comprising all the three districts of the Ranglong territory. If the Sethat is performed by parual anthum, then the venue of the function must be in any village of the Khopui district. And the animal for sacrifice also must be wild bison. Normally a priest belongs to any clan of the community can perform various kinds of sacrifices. But in the case of Sethat, the priest

belongs to the priestly clan of Sanghuipu must stand and offer the sacrifice. The sacrificial animals also must be slain by the person belonging to the clan of Tansurai. The proceedings of the sacrifice are traditionally supposed to be accomplished in the morning part of the day. The sacrificial meat, except the heads of the animals, is consumed by the community people. Traditionally, they used to send nine pieces of the sacrificial meat to every village of the Ranglong territory so that each member who could not attend the function in person could atleast share the sacrificial meat of the wild baison. On the second day, they used to arrange meal called "Binaiko Panta" at the residence of the Sadar Kalim in which they used to discuss the matter relating to the customary law. The bison was put into a pit and tied up its head to a particular pillar called "Narengphang".[8] Narengphang is the name of the pillar where the bison is tied up, but not the name of the tree. "Khuangcho" or "Anpang" trees are generally used for this narengphang. Right from the time immemorial, the Vangru clan is entrusted to do the work of bringing this narengphang from the jungle as to be the pillar of the bison whenever the festival of sethat is performed. Sagornal and Khozobak districts also used to perform the festival of sethat. It is to be noted here that Sagornal and Khozabak did not kill wild baison but baffalo. And they also did not worship the Tiruang, but they worshipped Durga. Liandong was a bison looked after by the owners as one of their own family members. When they sold Liandong to a rich unknown landlord, the owners bid farewell to Liandong with this song:

"Alia Amjot sap ngaiin,
Liandong le dam a khiaka,
Liandong le dam sua lui keng,
Na chun ruangtinu ranga,
Liandong losang ka phal chian;
Tama kangsa a chunga,
Na man sumsial anbe zei,
Liandong naiva nuar no ro,
Ansir nuk tiang kei no ro,
Na chun ruangtinu rang keng;
Tuka taikhua a varten,
Anthok kalchem nei nei rang,
Gazipur tunglam so nei lui rang,
Pheiphung tatlung mathoi no ro;
Gazipur tunglam na lui le,
Liandong solva van ngam ro;
Na nuk thei ang thir ro do,
Kum thum saibua nei lengna ngai,
Ningbui tuanvai mo a tung ual?

Ningbui raku mo a kai ual?
Na chun zingnu mo na ngai huai?
Na zua chalrang mo na ngai huai?
Oilam bazar na suak le,
Liandong solva van ngam ro;
Tumo chaizung ding ret ni?
Dinnang zuapu ding ret inti;
Tunmo lengsial tan ret ni?
Longkan lengsial tan inti.
Sekhur zingai na tak le,
Narengphang biang na boi le,
Chailung zingkhuang ansut le,
Salung le chai anma na ti;
Laisam sikti nanthek le,
Bompuan niarsang anchun na ti,
Liandonglian oi ka lung lak."

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

"Mr. Alia Amjot, the rich man,
Who fixed the price of Liandong?
No one could effort the price of Liandong,
But for the sake of mother Tiruang only,
I am to sacrifice Liandong;
On the copper plate,
Your price is putting now,
Do not be regretted by all,
Do not have a turning back,
You are for our mother Tiruang river;
When a new morning will come,
You are to set your journey,
You have to over come the hill of Gazipur,
Do not have a slow walk;
When you over come the hill of Gazipur,
O my Liandong please have a rest there;
Have a look at your behind,
Over the pasture you spent for three years,
Do you have a cry heart?
Does it look attractive?
Do you have a mind to see your mother Zingnu?
Do you have a mind to see your father Chalrang?
When you reach Oilam Bazar,
O my Liandong please have a rest there;
Who will be standing as the priest?

Dinnang will be the priest;
Who will be putting the dao on the neck of the bison?
Longka will slay the bison,
When you will be putting in the pit,
When you will be tied up to the Narengphang,
When the drum will be beaten,
Your mind will be up set;
When they will pour sacrificial water over you,
Your skin will be trembling,
O my Liandonglian, My heart is crying for you".

It is presumed that when the Ranglongs made their settlements at Oilam village, the parual anthum sethat was performed where Liandong was offered as sacrifice. Dinnang was the priest and Longkanang was the Tansurai who slew Liandong. Some said that the price of Liandong was rupees 300 only.

KHOKANG SETHAT

"Khokang" means the burnt village. Some time in 1946, a Ranglong hamlet was located somewhere in the present Padmabil of North Tripura which was totally ruined in the fire. As such the fact, perhaps the village was so named as Khokang. When they lived at Khokang, the clan of Banmaher performed the sacrifice of sethat which was known as "Banmaher Sethat". Since the Khokang village was fallen within the jurisdiction of Khozobak district, they offered buffalo to the Durga instead of wild bison. It is said that Mualzuichuang Banmaher was the "Utkung", which means the owner of the house where the function was held. His nickname was Bonram. The Ochai was Rilsumlian Sanghuipu and the Tansurai was Patonngir Tansurai.

SOROKDUNG SETHAT

"Sorokdung" means the river of the road. There was a Ranglong hamlet somewhere on the bank of a river in the valley of Vomsual in 1949 when the Sagornal district performed the sacrifice of sethat which was known as "Sorokdung Sethat". Traditionally they did not kill wild bison but buffalo and they also worshipped the Durga in that sacrifice. Rollungsuam Banmaher was the Utkung. His nickname was Baltoi. Rilsumlian Sanghuipu was the Ochai and Ringaknang Tansurai was the Tansurai. It is said that the Chemlian, which means big Dao given by the king of Tripura on 1337 Tring, 14 Mag was broken while slaying the sacrificial animal.[9]

TIVALIAN SETHAT

"Tivalian" means big rivulet. Tivalian is now occupied by natural forest. "The Parual Anthum Sethat" was perfomed at Tivalian village in the month of March in 1956 in which all the three districts of the Ranglong territory took participation. As the sacrifice was performed by all the three districts of the Ranglong territory, the sacrificial animal was also a wild bison which was

offered to the Tiruang river, the mother river of the Ranglong people. The then utkung was Neitungthang Tara and Rilsumlian Sanghuipu was the Ochai. Ringaknang Tansuarai was the Tansurai who killed the sacrificial animal.

ROTHABIL SETHAT

Rothabil sethat was performed sometime in 1960 by the Sagornal district in which they offered buffalo instead of wild bison. They offered the sacrifice to the "Neineknu", which means the Laxmi. The then Utkung was Neibumsuam, Rilsumlian Sanghuipu was the Ochai and Ringaknang Tansurai was the Tansurai who slew the sacrificial animal.

SONKHOLA SETHAT

So far the last Sethat was performed at Sonkhola village in 2000 A.D. in which the participation of all the three districts of the Ranglong territory was observed. Unlike the other festival of Sethat held in the past, the Sonkhola Sethat was ended with some peculiarity remarks which were never seen by the society. As was stated earlier that if the Sethat was "Parual Anthum Sethat", which means performed by all the three districts of the Ranglong territory, then it must be performed in any village of the Khopui zone. But Sonkholla Sethat, though it was parual anthum sethat, was held at Sonkhola village which was outside the Khopui district. Sonkhola village was under the jurisdiction of Sagornal district. Manikbul Vai was the Utkung and Duisengbul Sanghuipu was the Ochai. Traditionally the clan of Tansurai must slay the sacrificial animal in any sethat. But Manikbul Vai, who does not belong to the Tansurai clan, stood as the Tansurai and slew the animal. The Sagornal district would not kill wild bison whereas in 2000 A.D., a wild bison was killed and offered to the river Tiruang. The Sagornal district used to kill buffalo and worshipped the Durga.

KERPUJA

Kerpuja is termed as "Chamer" which is the most important festival of the Ranglong tribe, which falls generally sometime in the month of July when the ear of paddy begins to form. It is the most colourful and important festival which lasts for a period of three days. On this occasion, all the villagers of different age groups rejoice in singing and dancing and making merry making, for this festival comes but only once a year. It is a festival for worshipping the deities whose blessings are sought on the crops. The first day is meant for the community sacrifice performed at a place by the whole community co-operatively. On the morning of the first day every household of the village goes to the jhum to offer a kind of sacrifice of an egg by the indigenous method, which they call "Changdai". Then they bring a few seedlings of paddy and cotton to offer to the sacrifice. The sacrifice is traditionally done in the evening where the priest used to offer the sacrifice of a pig and fourteen fowls to the deities. They used to erect a small hut and the sacrifice is performed in that hut. The sacrificial meat of the animals is

consumed by the community people. The following deities are worshiped in this community sacrifice: Sapite, Nabungnu ngai, Sunrolpu ngai, Chemrat ngai, Tarpa and deities of water. On the second day, individual sacrifice is offered by each household of the village. In the early morning of the second day, the Ochai offers sacrifice of a cock and a hen in each household of the village. Mention must be made that the Ochai does not use dao on this day to kill the fowls but a sharpen knife made of bamoo. And the head of the fowls should not be separated from the body. After killing the fowls, the Ochai used to sprinkle its hot blood on the seedlings of paddy and cotton. He then covered the seedlings of paddy and cotton and the knife of bamboo which he used to kill the fowls with five or seven leaves of such tree what they called "Nakia".[10] He then tied up it to the main post of the house. The owner of the household used to offer rice beer which is tasted by the Ochai, then followed by the other drinking from it. This is the day that they enjoy the whole day with adequate drinks and food and invite each other to each household.

They wear their dress in different fashions according to their rank and age in the society. In the evening of the third day, the male youths used to collect rice and vegetables from each household and cook it in the southern gate of the village. As dark falls down, the youths started moving in a form of procession from the southern gate to the northern gate of the village with loud noises using drums and different kinds of musical instruments. While moving from the southern gate, they used to throw stones to every house, which is considered that if it is done so, then the bad spirits would run away from the village. This is termed as "Chonok". The women were not allowed to participate in the procession. Some particular prohibitions were imposed strictly during the three days of the festival.

Traditionally no one is allowed to enter the village having an umbrella over the head, no one should expose clothes in the sun for drying, women should not carry water on their waist or head, and no one should go to the fields to work. The trespassers are usually punished by the village court. The Mizos used to call it as "Chapchar Kut" which is celebrated every year in gorgeous manner and also observed as the government holiday in Mizoram, while the Kukis have "Pawl Kut" and observed on every 1st November of the year as holiday by the Manipur Government, [11] the Nagaland Government observed the Pawl Kut of the Kukis as holiday on 17th January every year.[12]

RICE BEER

The rice beer, which is termed as "Zu", used to play an important role in the life of the Ranglong society. The life of the Ranglongs is incomplete without zu. It is daily used like water is used. Thus it can be said that zu is a part of the Ranglong culture and is inseparable from their society. To entertain friends, neighbours, relatives and guests, zu is compulsory. There can be no ritual ceremonies, feasts, festivals and worship without zu.

It is prepared in each household by all the women for personal use. For

the preparation of zu, first rice is cooked. The cooked rice is spread over a mat and dried for sometimes. Then yeast is pounded to powder and is mixed with the cooked rice. The mixture is left for sometimes before being placed into a water vessel and covered properly. After five days the fermented rice becomes a strong drink or liquor, which is drunk after adding water to it. Rice is the best used and is favoured by all. To prepare zu, generally four types of earthen pitchers are used like dek, telikola, matkola and sikizu-um. Dek is the biggest pitcher which could contain about 35 kilograms of rice. Generally the well to do people can prepare zu in the dek. Sikizu-um is the smallest pitcher. For drinking zu, a tiny pipe of bamboo or a kind of creeper called "Arthale" is used. The Ochai first used to drink zu, and the next are followed in order to the seniority in age. After drinking the zu, the left over rice pulp is extracted and the juice is taken out and mixed with the molasses. The mixture is put in a pot and then placed over the hearth in a special apparatas for distillation. When the mixture is boiled, the vapour is collected in the empty pot fitted in the middle. The distilled vapour thus collected becomes strong country liquor which is termed as "Rakzu". It is very strong liquor and is not generally used in the sacrifice. It is used in the social functions.

YEAST

Yeast is termed as "Chol". Chol is made of the following elements: Ketamnu chiak – a kind of grass; laisainei rang – a kind of creeper; thingthumte kor – piles of a tree; ziron bua – leaves of a kind of tree; masu bua – leaves of sugar cane; naitamnu chiak – a kind of grass; zongmakhiri – a kind of creeper; mot bua – leaves of banana and sasai – rice. The rice is first soaked in water. All these elements are mixed up together and then pounded in the sumpuk till they are properly powdered.

When they have been mixed thoroughly, water is poured into it so that it becomes thick as a paste. Traditionally three small pieces of flat rounded cakes are made with it of which two are females and one is male. After the chol is being prepared, it is then placed on bamboo mats to dry in the sun. After five or seven days the chols are ready for use in preparing zu.

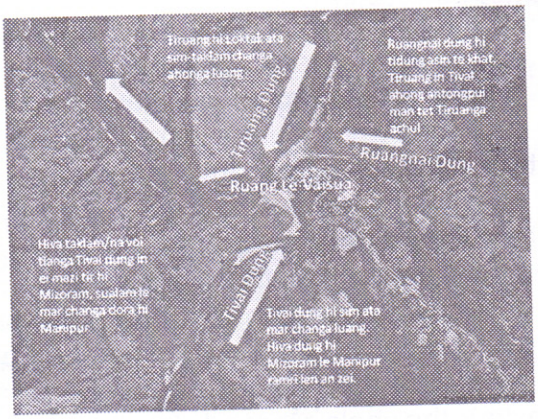
SOME IMPORTANT RIVERS

As was stated earlier, the Ranglongs are one of the river dwelling tribes which signifies that they are originally plain tribes residing in river valleys, not the hills. From the time immemorial the Ranglongs were associated with the rivers for being they were river worshippers. Some of the rivers that the Ranglongs came in contact with are given here.

THE RIVER BARAK

The Barak is the biggest river that the Ranglongs were associated with from the time immemorial. They call it "Tiruang dung" and regard themselves as to be the children of this river. And they call it "Na nu dung", which means Mother River. They thought that the deity of Tiruang river is the most powerful and supreme than that of those they have else. They used to worship this

river once in every four or five years of interval by offering the sacrifice of a wild bison. The river Barak is originated from the Liyai village of the Japvo Hill in Manipur of India. At Tipaimukh the Barak met the river Tivai. The principal tributaries of the Barak are all in India and are the Jiri, the Dhaleshwari which is known as the Tlawng in Mizoram, the Singla, the Longai, the Madhura, the Sonai which is known as the Tuirial in Mizoram, the Rukni and the Katakhal. It is running the length of 564 kilometres in India from its source. It is flowing west through Manipur State, then southwest leaving Manipur and entering Mizoram State. In Mizoram State the Barak flows southwest then veers abruptly north when joined by a north flowing stream and flows into Assam State where it turns westward again near Lakhipur as it enters the plains. It then flows, west, past the town of Silchar where it is joined by the Madhura river. After Silchar, it flows for about 30 odd kilometers and just west of Badurpur, it enters Bangladesh and at its mouth divides into two, with the northern branch being called the river Surma and the southern the river Kushiyara.


Tiruang hi Lohtak ata sim-taidam changa ahonga luang.
Tiruang Dung
Ruangnai dung hi tidung asin tu khat. Tiruang in Tivai ahong aitongpui man tet Tiruanga achui
Ruangnai Dung
Ruang Le Vaisua
Hiva taidamvina voi tlanga Tivai dung in ei mazi te hi Mizoram, sualam le mar changa dora hi Manipur.
Tivai Dung
Tivai dung hi sim ata mar changa luang. Hiva dung hi Mizoram le Manipur kaw lam an zei.

The view of Ruanglevaisua

THE RIVER LANGKAI / LONGAI

The Longai river is one of the important rivers which has important significant in the culture and tradition of the Ranglong community. Longai is the corrupted form of "Langkai". It is still known as "Langkaih dung" by the Mizo people.[13] But due to its heavy pronounciation, in the course of time, it seemed that it has been corrupted and a new name took birth which is now known as "Longai". Thus it can be presumed that the word "Longai" is derived from "Langkai" which is one of the clans of the Ranglong community. The Ranglongs used to call it as "Bamon dung". It originated from the Jampui hills of Tripura and joined the river Kushiyara, a branch of the river Barak, through the Barak valley. It is not out of place to mention here that most of the

Ranglongs of Assam and Mizoram are still living along the bank of the river Longai. The Khopui district of the Ranglong province is particularly concentrated this river. A legend said that there was a poor man of Langkai clan who could not even support his family due to poverty. One day the poor man was told in his dream to offer sacrifice with a white cock to the deity of the river Langkai and put a earthen bowl covered with white cloth on its bank. He then did so as he was told in his dream. On the next early morning, the poor man found the earthen bowl with full of money. From that day onwards, the poor man was changed into a rich man in the society. Seeing the rapid changes of the economic position of the poor man, they could realize that it was so happened due to the favour of the river Langkai. It is said that owing to the fact, the people put the name of the river as river Langkai. From here only the name of the river Langkai came into existence. It has been generally said that the man cheated the river Langkai and hence he left the Langkai valley. Owing to that reason the Langkai population is much negligible in the Langkai valley.

THE RIVER JURI

The Ranglongs used to call the river Juri as "Cholri dung". It is said that the Ranglongs of the Sagornal district entered Tripura following the river route of the river Juri. Generally the Sagornal district is concentrated the Juri valley. It originated from the Jampui Hill. There are also rivers like Thalkang, Rupini, Tivai, Brahmaputra, Manu, Deo and Dholai which the Ranglongs are associated with from the past.

END NOTES

1. Pathian – It is the supreme God having no any form.
2. Sukundrai and Bukundrai –Borrowed words from Borok community.
3. Golarai and Kalarai –Borrowed words from Borok community.
4. Zomdugal and Zudugal –Borrowed word from Borok community.
5. Bengkhep – A kind of basket to put fowls when sacrifice is held.
6. Dev Varman,S.B.K.: op.cit., p. 4
7. Tang Kor – Sanghuipu and Tansurai are called Tangkor which mean hill Bengali. They are priestly clan in the Ranglong society.
8. Narengphang - Narengphang is the name of the pillar where the bison is tied up, but not the name of the tree.
9. Big dao is given to the Ranglongs by the king on 1337 Tring, 14 May for the sacrificial purpose.
10. Nakia – A kind of tree which leaves are used for this sacrifice.
11. Haokip P.S. : op.cit., p. 82
12. Ibid. : P. 82
13. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : op. cit., p. 5

CHAPTER VIII

LANGUAGE

According to a recent estimate the tribal people speak 105 different languages and 225 subsidiary languages. This itself indicates what great variety is found among the tribal people. For languages are highly structured and in many ways reflect the social structure and the values of the society. However, for the purpose of clarity and understanding, the languages have been classified into a number of families. The languages spoken by the tribes in India can be classified into four major linguistic families: Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Chinese, Dravidian and Indo-European. Many dialects were intermixed in each of the linguistic groups and there was at first no standard language. The Halam language is cognate with the Kuki–Chin group of the greater Tibeto-Burman family. As the Halams are divided into various clans and each clan, living in a compact geographical area, has its own identity and tradition. Owing to the physiography of their land and habit, there are some minor differences of the sounds in the dialect of each clan of the Halam speaking people. To indicate the same object the sound produced by the twisting of tongue by different clans varies a little either more or less shorter or longer particularly in case of nasal sounds. The Ranglong dialect is the same that of the Halam. The Ranglong used to call the Halam language as "Riamchong" which means the dialect of the hill people. The Ranglong dialect is more akin to the dialect of Hmar than the Lushei dialect. It is thus believed that they formerly lived together, if not, very close to each other. Similarities are noticed among the dialects of various tribal groups living in the north east India. Since the dialects of all clans of the Halam community have similarities with each other, their remote forefathers were believed to have originated from the same stock. Their way of day to day living, material cultures, folk tales are all same. However, there are certain differences due to contact with other tribal and non- tribal in their respective area of habitation. The overall literacy percentage among the Ranglong is around 85% in which male percentage is higher than its counterpart female. So far as literature is concerned, the Ranglongs have no script of their own but they borrowed from the roman script for any documentation and writings. Generally they used the same alphabet that of the Halam. The following letters are used for any documentation and writings of the Halam language:

A B CH D E F G H I J K L

M N O P R S T U V W Z

There are 23 alphabets in Halam language. Of these five are vowels – **A E I O U**, eighteen are consonants – **B CH D F G H J K L M N P R S T V W Z**.

Articles – There are no articles in the Ranglong dialect. The numeral angkhat, one, is used as an indefinite article, while definiteness may be expressed by demonstrative pronouns and relative clauses.

Nouns – Gender is only distinguished in the case of animate beings. In the case of human beings different words may be used for the two genders. But generally gender is distinguished by means of suffixes.

Number – There are two numbers the singular and the plural. The suffix 'ngai' or 'ngai ha' is used when it is necessary to mark the plural. Thus, pa ngai or pa ngai ha means fathers.

Case – The Nominative does not take any suffix. The suffix in denoting the agent may be added to the subject of a transitive verb. The Accusative is usually formed without any suffix. But sometimes the postposition *rang* is added. Thus, Koi ka rang hong ro a na ti.

Adjective – Adjectives are plural after the noun they qualify, and suffixes and postpositions are usually added to them, and not to the qualified noun. There is no relative pronoun. Demonstrative pronouns, participles and interrogative pronouns are used to express relativity.

Verb – Verbs are conjugated in person and number by means of pronominal prefixes. There is no passive voice in Ranglong language. Compound verbs are formed by means of prefixes and by adding other words to modify the meaning.

The Halam language and the Komrem language of Manipur are very close to each other. A list of Ranglong words are given here and compared with those of the some other communities and presented in a tabular form.

COMPARISON OF SOME OF THE WORDS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES[1]

HALAM		KOMREM	
PROSE	**VERSE**	**PROSE**	**VERSE**
Arsi	Siar	Arsi	Siar
Ar	Thekar	Ar	Thekar
Ban	Chongban	Ban	Changban
Mit	Singmit	Hmit	Singhmit
Mitrathi	Ruaithi	Hmit rath	Roithi
Meitei	Teimei	Hmeitei	Tleimei
In	Khumlan	Inn	Sikinn
Ka nu	Ka chun	Ka nu	Ka chun
Ka pa	Ka zuo	Ka pa	Ka jo
Ka u	Ka chin	Ka u	Ka chin
Ke	Pheiphung	Ke	Pheiphung

Lu	Thunglu	Lu	Tlhunglu
Sazuk	Zuksial	Sajuk	Jukshel
Nga	Limnga	Nga	Limnga
Tha	Sortha	Tlha	Sortha
Tui	Siktui	Tui	Siktui
Ui	Liangui	Ui	Lemui
Vaak	Liangaak	Vaak	Akva
Puan	Khumpuan	Pon	Langpon
Sam	Tolsam	Sam	Sorsam
Saipui	Puisai	Saipui	Phusai
Zong	Simzong	Zong	Simzong

COMPARISON OF SOME OF THE WORDS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES[2]

HALAM	MIZO	MATU	ASHO	KHUMI	ENGLSIH
Angkhat	Pakhat	Pakhat	Khat	Ha	One
Anni	Pahnih	Pahnih	Hnih	Nya	Two
Anthum	Pathum	Pathum	Thum	Hum	Three
Manli	Pali	Pali	Li	Palyh	Four
Ranga	Panga	Panga	Ngo	Phang	Five
Aruk	Paruk	Paruk	Sok	Tureu	Six
Sari	Pasarih	Pasarih	Sih	Saryah	Seven
Ariat	Pariat	Pariat	Set	Taja	Eight
Akua	Pakua	Pakua	Kua	Takha	Nine
Som	sawm	Pahra	Ha	Ho	Ten

COMPARISON OF SOME OF THE WORDS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

ENGLISH	MIZO	MOITEI	HALAM
Hair	Sam	Sam	Sam
Eye	Mit	Mit	Mit
Tongue	Lei	Lei	Malei
Bone	Ruh	Saru	Ru
Fish	Sangha	Nga	Nga
Meat	Sa	Sa	Me, Sa
Road	Kong	Lambi	Lampui
Ear	Beng	Na	Kuar
Nose	Hnar	Naton	Nar
Mosquitonet	Thosilen	Kangkhal	Khangkhal
Father	Ka pa	Papa	Papa
Grandfather	KA pu	Pupu	Pupu
Year	Kum	Kum	Kum
And	Tichuan	Aduga	Hatuka
Teeth	Ha	ia	Ha

COMPARISON OF SOME OF THE WORDS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

ENGLISH	HALAM	MIZO	KUKI	MANIPURI
Man	Mi	Mi	Mi	Mi
Elephant	Saipui	Sai	Sai	Samu
Dog	Ui	Ui	Ui	Hui
Pig	Vok	Vawk	Voh	Owk
Road	Lampui	Kawng	Lampi	Lambi
Home	In	In	In	yum
Name	Raming	Hming	Min	Ming
Water	Ti	Tui	Tui	Ising
Hair	Sam	Sam	Sam	Sam
Hand	Kut	Kut	Khut	Khut
Eye	Mit	Mit	Mit	Mit
Teeth	Ha	Ha	Ha	Ya

KINSHIP TERMS

ENGLISH	HALAM
Father's Father's Father Mother's Father's Father	: Pater
Father's Father's Mother Mother's Father's Mother	: Puiter
Father's Father/Mother's Father	: Pupu
Father's Mother/Mother's Mother	: Pipi
Father	: Papa
Mother	: Nunu
Father's elder brother Husband of mother's elder sister Mother's elder sister	: Pater
Wife of father's elder brother Father's younger brother	: Puiter
Husband of mother's younger sister Father's elder and younger sisters Wife of father's younger brother Wife of mother's elder brother	: Pangak
Wife of mother's younger brother	: Nini
Husband of father's elder and younger sister	: Marang
Mother's elder and younger brothers	: Mama
Mother's younger sister	: Nene
Wife's elder brother Husband's elder brother Younger brother's wife	: Vaipa

Wife's elder sister	
Wife's elder sister	: Vainu
Elder sister's husband	
Wife's younger brother	
Husband's younger brother	: Kumoipa
Wife's younger sister	
Husband's younger sister	
Elder brother's wife	: Kumoinu
Father-in-law	: Tarpu
Mother-in-law	: Tarpi
Husband	: Ruathar/Ompui
Wife	: Nungak/Thainu/Ompui
Brother	: Parual
Brother's sister	: Sarnu
Sister's brother	: Chapa
Sister's sister	: Zuarpui
Nephew/ Niece	: Sapa / Sanu
Grand Child	: Tusa
Great Grand Child	: Bora
Great Great Grand Child	: Rasi
Great Great Great Grand Child	: Ralai
Wife's brothers' wife	
Wife's sisters' husband	
Husband's brothers' wife	
Husband's sisters' husband	: Sarui
Husband's second wife	: Razei
Wife's second husband	: Palam
Boy's (boy) friend	: Mal
Boy's (girl) friend	: Rualnu
Girl's (girl) friend	: Lomnu
Girl's (boy) friend	: Rualpa
Elder brother and sister	: Vovo
Younger brother	: Naipa
Younger sister	: Nainu
Son's and daughter's parents-in-law	: Thur
Step Father	: Pan changpa
Step Mother	: Nun changnu

Some pattern of sentence is noted here.

WORDS RELATING TO HUMAN BODY

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Head	Lu	Eye	Mit
Hair	Sam	Nose	Nar
Tongue	Malei	Teeth	Ha
Neck	Ring	Hand	Kut
Chest	Rop	Waist	Kong
Stomach	Von	Skin	Vun
Ear	Kuar	Mouth	Mur/Bai
Throat	Rol	Finger	Maria
Leg	Ke	Bone	Ru
Liver	Mathin	Kidney	Makal
Soul	Ratha	Saliva	Machil
Pus	Rathi	Heart	Malung
Blood	Thi	Sweat	Rathan
Thigh	Ketor	Ankle	Ke arti
Breast	Ranu	Face	Maisua
Forehead	Machal	Cheek	Biang
Lip	Ner	Body	Pum
Heel	Kemadil	Arm	Masui
Palm	Maza	Toes	Kemaria
Intestine	Ril	Moustache	Makhamul
Nail	Matin	Ring finger	Kutning
Middle finger	Kutlai	Index finger	Kutchal
Thumb	Kutpui	Little finger	Kutte
Knee	Mankhuk	Shoulder	Dar
Brain	Luthuruak	Spine	Matingpuiru
Buttock	Pin	Foot	Kepha
Tear	Mitrathi	Stool	Ek
Urine	Mazun	Calf	Manphon

WORDS RELATING TO INSECTS AND PASTES

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Butterfly	Pelep	Rat	Mazu
Ant	Sikngir	Scrap	Ai
Snake	Marul	Mosquito	Langsan
Leech	Ravot	Tortoise	Satel

WORDS RELATING TO BIRDS AND ANIMALS

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Bird	Va	Eagle	Muliang
Hen	Ar	Pig	Vok
Fox	Sial	Cat	Ameng

Goat	Kel	Horse	Sakor
Buffalo	Saloi	Elephant	Saipui
Sheep	Bera	Bear	Avom
Deer	Sakhi	Cow	Sarat nupang
Tiger	Akoi	Lion	Akoibaknei
Animal	Ran	Cattle	Sarat ngai
Ox	Saratchal	Calf	Saratte
Pony	Sakorte	Stag	Sakhitang
Rhinoceros	Gonda	Monkey	Zong
Boar	Mangal	Frog	Uichok
Crocodile	Ole	Fowl	Ar
Wolf	Ngelang	Owl	Simbu
Bat	Bak	Crow	Va-ak
Parrot	Tokorai	Turkey	Chinvatok
Horn	Saraki	Tail	Ramoi
Egg	Arti	Nest	Rabu
Dove	Vasu	Pigeon	Pharvali
Wing	Mantha	Duck	Vatok
Cuckoo	Kukil	Vulture	Sarakuru

WORDS RELATING TO PLANTS AND ITS PARTS

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Grass	Chiak	Tree	Thing
Leaf	Bua	Branch	Abak
Fruit	Thei	Bud	Ramuam
Root	Razung	Flower	Par
Bud	Ramuam	Seed	Aru
Peer	Akora	Lotus	Phuto
Banyan	Abuang	Thorn	Raling

WORDS RELATING TO CROPS, FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Paddy	Bu	Rice	Sasai
Cotton	Pat	Oilseed/Sesame	Asi
Lemon	Maser	Orange	Somotorai
Banana	Mot	Betel nut	Kua
Potato	Alubal	Brinjal	Manta
Maize	Vainim	Bean	Bepui
Food	Bu	Jackfruit	Lamphuang
Coconut	Narkela	Sugarcane	Masu
Chilly	Morsia	Ladiesfinger	Dakamanta
Vegetable	Anna	Yam	Bal
Cucumber	Sakma	Carrot	Kerot

Mustard leaf	Ancham	Flat bean	Bepui
Mushroom	Patung	Cauliflower	Parbor
Pea	Mothor	Snake gourd	Bemarul
Squash	Iskut	Fern	Kokodon
Onion	Purun	Pumpkin	Koromai
Cabbage	Ziklum	Sweet potato	Kolkai
Long bean	Aberaki	Bitter gourd	Kangkala
Radish	Mulai	Pear	Naspati
Plum	Borei	Blackberry	Zam
Musk Melon	Sakma	Papaya	Koiphol
Vine	Gerep kung	Grape	Gerep
Litchi	Lechu	Guava	Sobiri

WORDS RELATING TO HOUSE AND HOUSE GOODS

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
House	In/Khumlan	Window	Tukver
Latrine	Nomruang	Door	Suakhar
Spade	Kodal	Dao	Chem
Mosquitonet	Khangkhal	Village	Khua
Kitchen	Besuangin	Gun	Silai
Bed	Zalmun	Cloth	Puan
Pillow	Kobong	Hoe	Chemluzum
Box	Bakso	Quilt	Razai
Sickle	Koite	Spade	Kodal
Plough	Langol	Hammer	Sekchoi
Mat	Zampher	Ladder	Rakal
Pillar	Chopui	Courtyard	Kholaidung
Floor	Indunglai	Roof	Inchung
Ceiling	Aseng	Wall	Bang

WORDS RELATING TO NATURE

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Earth	Phil	World	Maniapur
Air	Thinthi	Cloud	Ansum
Hill	Mual	River	Tidung
Rain	Rua	Sun	Ani
Fire	Moi	Moon	Tha
Sky	Ramual	Star	Arsi
Soil	Phil	Light	Ra-ang
Earthquake	Ninu	Hail	Arial
Storm	Phaivua	Wind	Thinthi
River	Tidung	Drain	Nala

Eclipse	Okpa	Dew	Rodo
Mountain	Mualpui	Flood	Tilian
Smoke	Moikhu	Water	Ti
Shadow	Ralim	Canal	Tinar
Peak	Mualsip	Rock	Lungpui
Weather	Kikhuaomdan	Land	Phai
Continent	Khomualpui	Cylone	Kellaiher
Sunshine	Anisa	Comet	Arsirachangnei

WORDS RELATING TO COLOUR

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Blue	Adum	Black	Ahang
Brown	Philrong	Green	Aem
Grey	Dukapol	Purple	Senaduk
Red	Asen	Violet	Mantarong
White	Alang	Yellow	Aeng

WORDS RELATING TO TIME AND DIRECTION

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Day	Sun/Ni	Night	Zan
Noon	Sun	Evening	Khului
Yesterday	Mizan	Year	Kum
West	Taklam	South	Sim
Morning	Zing	Tomorrow	Nangtuk
East	Sualam	North	Mar

WORDS RELATING TO FOOD AND UTENSILS

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Food	Bu	Curry	An
Fish	Nga	Egg	Arti
Glass	Khuri	Salt	Machi
Meat	Me	Dish	Kheng
Comb	Makhui	Fan	Zamza
Spoon	Makhe	Bag	Marsa
Bucket	Balti	Bowl	Bangtok

WORDS RELATING TO DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Cloth	Puan	Short pant	Tomon ankhing
Coat	Kultaitak	Sweater	Zampar
Blouse	Nupangkultai	Cap	Lukhu
Vest	Genzi	Watch	Gori

Socks	Muza	Purse	Sumkok
Spectacle	Tarmit	Pocket	Zep

WORDS RELATING TO SPICES

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Mustard	Hoiro	Garlic	Purunngui
Pepper	Morsia	Coriander	Patekhom
Ginger	Aithing	Turmeric	Aieng
Bay leaf	Anmarimbua	Cumin seed	Zira
Salt	Machi	Mustard oil	Sariak

WORDS RELATING TO DISEASES

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Sickness	Natna	Disease	Rikhua
Pain	Ana	Stomachache	Vonana
Vomit	Anlua	Cold	Adai
Fever	Raitun	Loose-motion	Ekazor
Menstruation	Annim	Wound	Apan
Itch	Anthak	Headache	Luna
Cough	Burkhu	Giddiness	Lunhai
Cholera	Vonakei	Asthma	Phukansam
Leprosy	Aphar	Sputum	Khak
Pregnant	Anrai	Blind	Acho
Deaf	Aset	Lame	Akhor
Dumb	Chongkului	Faint	Anmoi
Toothache	Hana	Thirst	Anral
Hunger	Cham	Medicine	Lui
Ointment	Ankhuarua	Bandage	Antuam
Feeble	Ranakabui	Wart	Singsilit
		Mole	sadum

SOME ADJECTIVES

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Good	Asa	Bad	Asiat
Difficult	Antak	Easy	Ahui/Abei
Ripe	Amin	Break	Akui
Lazy	Andok	Love	Andit
Much	Atam	Little	Atom
Many	Atam	More	Atam ual
Few	Alakte	Weak	Aduai
Whole	Aloma	Some	Senkhat
Full	Abit	All	Aloma
Short	Abong	Long	Asei

Big	Alian	Small	Asin
Far	Ala	Near	Anai
High	Ansang	Wide	Akhangalian
Hard	Anchang	Fine	Asa
Soft	Annui	Thick	Ansa
Thin	Anpha	Strong	Anchang
Dark	Azing	Deep	Anthuk
Old	Amarua	New	Athar
Open	Anlong	Raw	Asel
Clean	Anthiang	Ugly	Melsia
Great	Alian	Sharp	Angei
Bitter	Akha	Sweet	Athum
Cold	Adai	Warm	Alum
Tasty	Ati	Wrong	Diklui
Kind	Asing	Honest	Adik
Faithful	Iamrua	Finish	Anzui
Wet	Achop	Poor	Anriang
Correct	Adik	Half	Anbak
Late	Asot	Cheap	Anem
Equal	Anrual	End	Ahek
Costly	Alu	Slow	Annu

PRESENT TENSE

ENGLISH	HALAM SINGULAR	HALAM PLURAL
I go	Koi ka se	Koini na se
You go	Nang na se	Nangni na se
He goes	Ama a se	Amani a se u
I eat rice	Koi bu ka nek	Koini bun a nek
You eat rice	Nang buna a nek	Nangni bu na nek
He eat rice	Ama bu a nek	Amani bu a nek u

PAST TENSE

ENGLISH	HALAM SINGULAR	HALAM PLURAL
I went	Koi ka se sua zei	Koini na se sua zei
You went	Nang na se sua zei	Nangni na se sua u zei
He went	Ama se sua zei	Amani a se sua u zei
I ate rice	Koi bu ka nek sua zei	Koini bu na nek sua zei
You ate rice	Nang bun a nek sua zei	Nangni bu na nek sua u zei
He ate rice	Ama bu a nek sua zei	Amani bu a nek sua u zei

FUTURE TENSE

ENGLISH	HALAM SINGULAR	HALAM PLURAL
I shall go	Koi kei se rang	Koini nei se rang

You will go	Nang nei se rang	Nangni nei se rang
He will go	Ama ei se rang	Amani ei se rang
You will come	Nang nei hong rang	Nangni nei hong rang
I shall come today	Avian kei hong rang	Avian koini nei hong rang
He will tell you	Aman nang na ril inti	Amanin nang na ril inti.
I shall eat rice	Koi bu kei nek rang	Koini bu nei nek rang
You will eat rice	Nang bu nei nek rang	Nangni bu nei nek u rang
He will eat rice	Ama bu ei nek rang	Amani bu ei nek u rang

FORMATION OF SENTENCES

I eat rice.	- Koi bu ka nek.
She went to jhum.	- Ama luia se zei.
The children are playing	- Naipang ngai andai u lai tak.
The girls are dancing	- Nupang naipang ngai a lam u lai tak.
God is good.	- Pathian chu asa.
India is our country.	- India chu koini ram.
We live in Tripura.	- Tripurana nei leng.
Agartala is the capital of Tripura.	- Agartala chi Tripura khopui a ni.
We love peace.	- Koini anngoi nei a dit.
We shall meet at the station.	- Station-a antong inti.
It takes 20 minutes by bus.	- Bus le minit 20 a lak.
This bus is for Agartala.	- Hiva bus hi Agartala a se rang.
Please come here.	- Lungkhama hivan hong ro.
That is my house.	- Sova so ka in.
I am a teacher.	- Koi hi mastor ka ni.
I have no money.	- Sum don making.
Today is Sunday.	- Avian Ninuni.
Come after meal.	- Bu na nek sua le hong ro.
Let him come.	- Ama manhong ro.
Let him go.	- Ama manse ro.
Do not talk now.	- Atun chong no ro.
He drinks milk.	- Ama dut a buang.

SOME INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

Where shall we meet?	- Hovan mo nei antong rang?
How far is the station from here?	- Hivan ata station hotuk mo ala?
Where is your father?	- Na pa hovan mo ei om?
What are you looking for?	- Hong mo neia rok?
What is your father?	- Na pa hong mo ei tho?
Who are these people?	- Hiva mi ngai hi tu mo?
How are you?	- Na dam mo?
Who is the Chief Minister of Tripura?	- Tumo Tripura Chief Minister?
Where is your village?	- Hovan mo ba khua?

Which is the longest river of Tripura?	- Hova tidung mo Tripura-na asei khit?
What colour do you like?	- Hong zat rong mo nei adit?
Will you come tomorrow?	- Nangtuk nei hong rang mo?
What is the name of your state?	- Na state raming hong zat mo?
Where do you live in?	- Hovan mo nei om?
Have you taken food?	- Bu mo na nek sua zei?
Did you come to school yesterday?	- Mizan iskul na hong mo?
Are you crying?	- Achap mo na ni?
When did he come to school?	- Hotik han mo ama iskul ei hong?
Why are you beating him?	- Hong sik mo ama nei zem?
Do you love your country?	- Na ram na dit mo?

NUMERICAL COUNTING

Some of the numerals of Ranglong are given below side by side with that of the English.

ENGLISH	HALAM
Zero	Ite
One	Angkhat
Two	Anni
Three	Anthum
Four	Manli
Five	Ranga
Six	Aruk
Seven	Sari
Eight	Ariat
Nine	Akua
Ten	Som
Eleven	Somlekhat
Twelve	Somle-anni
Thirteen	Somle-anthum
Fourteen	Somlemanli
Fifteen	Somleranga
Sixteen	Somle-aruk
Seventeen	Somlesari
Eighteen	Somle-ariat
Nineteen	Somle-akua
Twenty	Somanni
Twenty one	Somanni angkhat
Twenty two	Somanni anni
Twenty three	Somanni anthum
Twenty four	Somanni manli
Twenty five	Somanni ranga
Twenty six	Somanni aruk

Twenty seven	Somanni sari
Twenty eight	Somanni ariat
Twenty nine	Somanni akua
Thirty	Somanthum
Forty	Sommanli
Fifty	Somranga
Sixty	Somaruk
Seventy	Somsari
Eighty	Somariat
Ninety	Somakua
Hundred	Raza
One thousand	Asangkhat
Two thousand	Asanganni
Three thousand	Asanganthum
Four thousand	Asangmanli
Five thousand	Asangranga
Six thousand	Asangaruk
Seven thousand	Asangsari
Eight thousand	Asangariat
Nine thousand	Asangakhua
Ten thousand	Asangsom

For counting beyond ten thousand, the Ranglongs use either Bengali or English numerals.

Today most languages borrow words from other languages. Every language has words that originated in another language and are adopted into its own. Of course, it was the fact that the Ranglongs also borrowed foreign words as many as possible from time immemorial which are not existed in their culture. The borrowed words are today more familiar to the Ranglongs than the native word. There is nothing gained by rejecting the familiar borrowed word for a less familiar native one.

SOME BORROWED WORDS FROM ENGLISH

ENGLISH	HALAM	ENGLISH	HALAM
Account	- Ekaon	Accident	- Eksiden
Bicycle	- Baisikol	Bank	- Bank
Bottle	- Bodol	Ball	- Bol
Court	- Kut	Chair	- Chiar
Cinema	- Sinima	Cooker	- Kukar
Duty	- Diuti	Dairy	- Dairi
Doctor	- Daktor	Dacoit	- Dakati
Electric	- Elektik	Engine	- Inzin
Fishery	- Fisari	Film	- Filim
Field	- Fil	Fan	- Fan

Hotel	- Hutel	Judge	- Jos
Kettle	- Ketili	Lamp	- Lem
Labour	- Lebar	Loan	- Lun
Matches	- Moichi	Office	- Ofis
Photo	- Foto	Police	- Pulis
Refrigerator	- Fris	School	- Iskul
Teacher	- Mastor	Table	- Tebul
Torch	- Tos	Train	- Trein
Zeep	- Zip		

BENGALI	HALAM	BENGALI	HALAM
Ata	- Ata	Alu	- Alubal
Almari	- Almari	Bazar	- Bazar
Biri	- Biri	Bosta	- Bosta
Bichar	- Bisar	Bejal	- Bejal
Chini	- Chini	Chun	- Chun
Dukan	- Dukan	Gari	- Gari
Hisab	- Hisap	Kam	- Kam
Khata	- Khata	Kolom	- Kolom
Kudal	- Kodal	Moida	- Moida
Narikel	- Narkela	Pap	- Pap
Saban	- Sabon	Sorkar	- Sorkar

WORD WITH MULTIPLE MEANING

Words have a different range of meaning in different languages. Like the other languages, the Ranglong language also has such words that have the same or nearly the same essential meaning in some or all senses.

WORD	MEANING	WORD	MEANING
Rua	- Rain, bamboo	Khek	- Shout, open
Tan	- Run, cut	Thi	- Dead, blood
Ramual	- Universe, sky	Pan	- Approach, wound
Thing	- Fuel, tree	Ti	- Water, taste
Lui	- Jhum, medicine	Sir	- Side, repent
Ru	- Bone, seed	Ai	- Meat, crab
Kui	- Call, break	In	- Sleep, house
Sak	- East, south	Sim	- Story, south
Mar	- North, fat	Lung	- Stone, mind
Chun	- Lime, mother	Nuk	- Back, pull, life
Lang	- White, lift	Reng	- King, all

THE WEEK DAYS OF THE HALAM

Ninuni	- Sunday
Thapani	- Monday

Mongolni - Tuesday
Nilaini - Wednesday
Thiampuni - Thursday
Rangkhani - Friday
Si-arni - Saturday

THE TWELVE MONTHS OF THE HALAM

Vatchang - January
Masai - February
Mantun - March
Duipa - April
Phurpa - May
Murpa - June
Azing - July
Aram - August
Ertha - September
Rutlai - October
Birip - November
Bualpa - December

THE FOUR SEASONS OF THE HALAM

Nudin - Winter Season
Pamsal - Spring Season
Kholum - Summer Season
Surlai - Rainy Season

MEASUREMENT OF LENGTH

The lowest unit of length is termed as Belkhat. Belkhat is equivalent to an inch. The distance between the toe of the thumb and that of the little finger of a stretched hand is called Khap.

9 Bel = 1 Khap
2 Khap = 1 Muk
4 Muk = 1 Lam

MEASUREMENT OF DEPTH

Depth is measured by some terms when one stands in a water area. The following are the different measurements of depth that is used by the Ranglongs. If the water touches upto the palm of the feet then it is termed as Ramit.

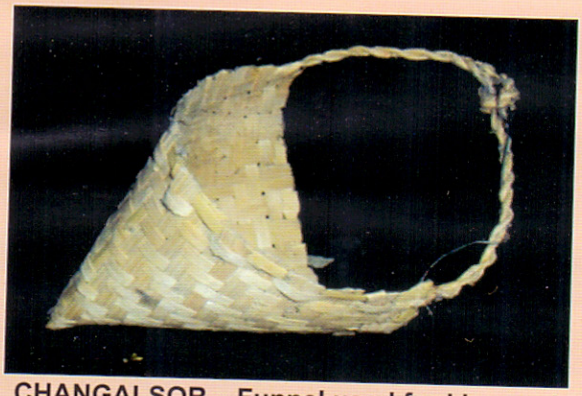
When water touches upto the ankel = Ramit
When water touches upto the thigh = Mankhuk
When water touches half of the thigh = Ketor
When water touches upto the waist = Kong
When water touches upto the chest = Rop
When water touches upto throat = Ring
When water touches upto mouth = Muambak
When water touches upto head = Lusip

THE HALAM PROVERBS

HALAM	MEANING
A enga zui samak, a luta zui asa.	- Pride cannot win, but humble can win.
Aninganpak sakhirangal huai zo lui.	- A half vessel is shaking.
Andok makhal nisa kol deng.	- A lazy man is talka-tive.
A pan a buia mo mathui ansut ngai?	- No wounds, no flies.
Apui nuk achalin azi.	- The foot print of the mother is followed by the kids.
Aphul zuang dop, vaakin a razul.	- The crows fly after the vultures.
Akoi chi avom tong.	- One who fears the tiger faces the bear.
Anriang panga a in kang rase.	- Let the house of the poor be burnt.
Anzak ana athi hui.	- It is easy to die than to be shameful.
Chong ahui le lam ahui a khel samak.	- No one can pass by the sweet word and high way.
Chong asia bang a popa zok.	- The wall has ear.
Din khatanlen din sari.	- If you miss today, you will miss seven days.
Inpui anding antak, pampui a zai a bei.	- It is more difficult to erect a house than to cut a big area of jhum.
Loko sena rirual.	- Unity is strength.
Na rang din khat, mi rang din khat.	- The day is for all.
Na ti nek le na inneina rathiat ro.	- Be careful of your drinking water and marriage.

ARBOM – Made of bamboo for keeping fowls (Coop)

LONGKHAI – Main basket for both male and female



CHANGALSOR – Funnel used for kharpani

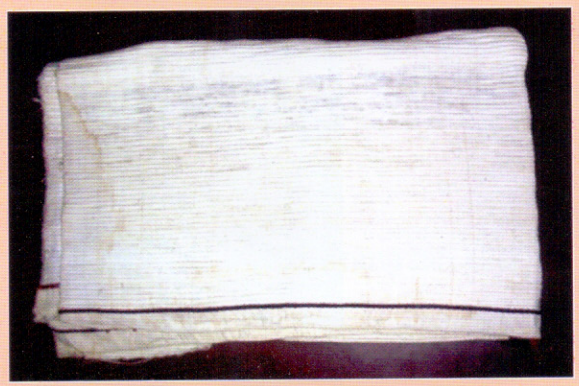
NAMRI

SENGKONG – To carry fuel and water

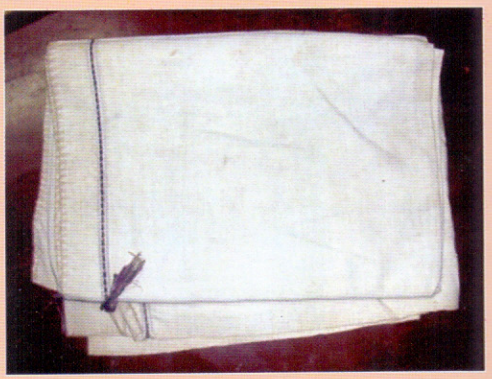
REL – Indigenous Almirah

RANGLONG MALE CULTURAL DRESS – KAMSA

RANGLONG FEMALE CULTURAL DRESS



RANGLONG CULTURAL BLANKET – PATZONPUAN



RANGLONG CULTURAL BLANKET – BORKI

Na parual nam ro, chandal san ro.	- Help the helpless one than your brother.
Ner borel kut banzi.	- A good speaker but having no hands.
Nupan ngilna radi, radinngilna sarai.	- Spouse is to forget parents and children are to forget spouse.
Nupa he tel lui le, thamoka sial a lo.	- He who does not obey parents falls in dark.
Nukanta zoisairi tong.	- He who comes late suffers a lot.
Nu ra-op a lian pa ravan ata.	- Mother is more careful than father.
Palai sa nokin mi mansual.	- A bad mediator can create quarrel.
Raimol anchi akung pan ro.	- If you fear stick, then approach it.
Rual chong anngai rapapamthing.	- He who follows friends falls in danger.

END NOTES

1. Kom, M. Serkhopao : *Lungdaizen(In Komrem)*, p. 53
2. Lalrinawma H. : op. cit., p. 206

CHAPTER IX

SOME FOLK SONGS AND FOLK TALES

In each primitive society songs are regarded as the outcome of sorrow, happiness, loss and gain etc. Thus the Ranglongs have a large number of songs which they use to perform in various social functions. The main economic activity also becomes bore without songs. Their marriage ceremonies and love affairs are not performed without songs. Hence it may be said that music revolves round their cycle. Some songs are noted here as example with or without translation. The Ranglongs have a large number of songs which they termed as "La", their early history and folktales are current among them.

THE SONG MAMA BUL

It was supposed that this song was composed during the years of 1870 – 1880 by Neitungchun. She could not bear any child to her husband due to her barrenness. So her husband was fallen in love with another woman named Tokhu. Her husband divorced her and got married to Tokhu. Before leaving her husband's house, she sang this song to express her grief.

Mama bul Oi, mama bul;
A chuan ma tang ka ran kar,
Tokhu mo darva na lei sai?
Raite khuangkhang kei va nok,
A ro chin dem kei nangna,
Mama bul Oi, mama bul;
A khong tan tim kan sung den,
A chuan ma tang um ka ran den,
I mo chin dem kei nangna?
Raite khuangkhang kei va nok,
A ro chin dem kei nangna;
Mama bul soi nei ton ha,
Mama bul sim mo nangil zei?
Tual don vuangva nan sung lai,
Tama kangsa na soi ton,
Mama bul sim khua mo nei anngil?
Zuapa kei lang zuara,
Tolsam buanthi na rom lai;
Mama bul soi nei ton ha!
Khong ngui thek ar asa le,
Mama bul soi nei ton ha!

Mama bul simkhua mo nei anngil?
Mama bul Oi, mama bul;
Raite khuangva na va le,
Bekhup chinnai ngak rase;
Tum le biang boi rase,
Mama bui Oi, Mama bul.

THE SONG OF KANDITNU

It is a love song which was probably composed in around 1800 when the Ranglongs were living in the Syhlet province. There was a couple in a village who loved each other dearly. One day it happened that the wife had to confront the judicial trial in the Syhlet district. To provide courage to his wife, the husband composed this song. It might be in the nineteenth century that this song was composed. It is very difficult to trace out today who the composer was and where from the song was composed.

Kandit nu Oi, Kandit nu,
Kandit le koi na ranga hin,
Changrang zan ara a zing ba!
Utor dori mot mo lo,
Dakhinlal ngai a choida,
Puba longai nodi ten,
Posim saidera nodi ten,
Dokhin madob sora ten,
Utora horma nodi ten,
Dakhinlal ngai a choida.
Sunam kangkang ei anram,
Zanam kangkang ei anram;
Sunam sermoi ei chuangna,
Zanam sermoi ei chuangna;
Teimei bung tin na suak le,
Hori songkirton anring;
Solman bung tin na suak le,
Solman arzan ei anpai;
Kamar bung tin na suak le,
Kamar seldeng ei anring;
Kandit nu oi, kandit nu!
Akhim ilat na kal le,
Bompuan niarsai nok no ro;
Rabei ngirsai ding ka ti
Kazipur tunglam en tar o!
Tunglam na mu na ke kham,

Kandit nu Oi, kandit nu!
Kazipur tunglam na sua le,
Tira zol pan tho inti;
Kandit nu oi, kandit nu!
Bonno thingphun thing lam liai,
Kandit nu Oi, kandit nu;
Utor zilmai morta ro,
Posim zilmai um morta ro;
A en ti ang um a dam niai zei!
Kandit nu oi, kandit nu!"

THE SONG OF SAKVONNU

This song was probably composed during the years 1910 – 1925 by Sobotril and Mualkhummanik. When they were cutting bamboos at Khedachhara for sale, one day they were happened to meet a Lushai girl going towards the Jampui Hills. Seeing the beautiful girl, they were very much impressed but they could not talk to her because they were just poor labourers. Moreover, they also did not know the Lushai language. So they just composed a song to explain the beauty of the Lushai girl. They named the song as "Sakvonnu" which means the daughter of Khosak. The Ranglongs used to call the Lushai as "Khosak".

O sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Sak von sak sim basata,
Khedasora suan chuna;
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Mairua holpon ke na lei tel,
Sak von nu vang a hong vun
Aijol le um anpiang nu,
A kung moharaj in keng,
Report khangva ei man vun.
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
A chun madai chu a tho mo?
Azuam madai a tho mo?
Sak von nu vang ei hong vun;
Dola le a upora,
Kala le rong kei ranga;
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Sak von nu vang ei hong vun so,
Riang kohaila ina;
Babuang soltim a lan ngam,
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Jampui lonsip en tar o,

Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Jampui lonsip khang iana;
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Longvon a rai ni sela;
Zopab saltim lon rei ba!
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!
Longvon a rai ni lui le,
Voia pang lam ke na pial chian;
Jampui lonsip a sua le,
Utor zilmai ke ei mor chian;
Ningbui raku ei makhai,
Sak von nu oi, sak von nu!"

THE SONG OF RAIVONZUARNU

It was said that the composer of this song was Phaneilian. He joined the British army when his wife was only three months pregnant. After joining the army he was not allowed to go home although he was very much longing for his family. So he composed a song for his wife which was name "Raivonzuarnu". It is not possible to point out the date and place that when and where this song was composed. But it can be said that it was composed during the reign of the British in India.

Andi O raivon zuarnu oi,
Kurma maming phua,
Loma maming phua;
Maming Phaneilian.
A kung ades a chul le,
A thar maming kan phua zei;
Boro sap thainu ngaiin,
Zoiramdang a ti.
Thanthum raite ha,
Changsim monzir zei?
A tian na sam sak,
Relte kua le,
Dutpan maichial le;
Atun ka sam sak,
Sap kat kua le,
Zonzoni khaipan,
Erte lung chun le,
Sakbai ka zon zei.
Andi O raivon zuar nu oi;
Puisai ambarei chunga,
Zodip chempai le,

Raiphol bonduk le,
Cheikhua kan leng zei,
Amel kan hui mo?
Andi O raivon zuar nu oi!

THE SONG OF DUMLANGNU

It was most probably that the song of Dumlangnu was composed during the year 1880–1890 by Sapanmanik. It is a love song.

Dumlang nu oi, dumlang nu,
Dumlang pang le mankhiang pang,
A ton lenthim siai ba nu!
Rong ngai rong dumlang nute,
A sat tiang um ka lakten,
Dumlang nu sormai so;
Telia rong pek ka ti.
Asiat tiang um ka lakten,
Leida ha huar keng ka ti!
Dumlang nu oi, dumlang nu.

FOLKTALES

Folktale is a part of cultural heritage. It is transmitted from one generation to another, one individual to another. There are so many folktales that are common among the Halam people even though they have been geographically dispersed far and wide. Legendary tales of Ranglong heroes and heroins, such as Ralngam, Rangvom, Rangsai, Doikungpu, Sianlek, Relsi, Buangkhup, Pengapa, Suining, Sasomchun Siachongi, Chonvangi, and Samulzuarnu have regaled many generations. Folktale is treated as a mirror of culture, which reflects the Ranglong earlier culture and bring solidarity, continuity and consistency among them.

How was the earth created?

According to legend, the Ranglongs believed that the earth was created by two brothers namely Subrai and Angrai. Subrai was senior to Angrai in age. Angrai was making the earth with special attention and as a result, it is said that all the plain areas and the valleys were made by him. Whereas Subrai was not paying any attention to his work at all but was fallen in love with Samulzuarnu. Of late when Subrai came to know that the work of making the earth still awaited him, he then rushed and started making the earth with a waving sword carelessly. It is believed that owing to that reason, gorges, swamps, hills, lakes and rivers appeared in the earth. There is a saying –

"Subrai ramual sin,
Samulzuarnu le,
Darva ansai kar,
A mualkho sin sim ang anngil;
Mualkho kairi kaira a chang zei."

The meaning of the song

"When Subrai created the earth,
He forgot his work,
He was fallen in love with Samulzuarnu;
The earth appeared uneven".

Subrai means God in Kokborok language. Subrai was also the name of Triluchan. According to Rajmala, there was a king of Khochung tribe whose name was Subrai. Samulzuarnu means the seller of wool. It can be presumed that the Ranglongs were accustomed to the use of wool from the time immemorial. The name Subrai was also not much alienated to the Ranglongs since Dakshin; the son of Triluchan was living with the Ranglongs at Kholongma.

How is day and night occurred?

According to the legend, it is believed that in the beginning there was light on earth for seven days and there was dark on earth for seven nights continuously. The rules of day and night were decided by Phualrangpa, the hornbill when he was the king. Owing to the long period of days and nights on earth, it became unbearable for living beings. And then they dethroned Phualrangpa from his kingship and they made Vasumte, which is locally known as peskunda, as a new king to rule over them. Vasumte was a clever king and he changed the rules of day and night in such a way that there be day and night rotationally. So from then onwards there is day and night rotationally.

Why is earthquake occurred?

According to legend, the earthquake called "Ninu" is believed to occur when the deity of earth shakes the earth which is rested on its head. A dung beetle called "Ektumbur" is engaged by the deity to collect information from human beings regularly. Sometimes the Ektumbur gets tired to send information of human beings to the deity. One day the Ektumbur told the deity that all human beings who lived on earth had died all. Then the deity doubted and verified the report of the Ektumbur by shaking the earth. The quake terrified the living beings, and then the women folk shouted by saying "Tongo, tongo" which reaches the ear of the deity. Then the deity of the earth became angry and struck the mouth of the Ektumbur with sarel. Thus it is said that the mouth of the Ektumbur became flat.

Why are solar aclipse and lunar aclipse occurred?

The eclipse called Okpa has an interesting story behind. There was a

man named "Mairokelte" who was suffering from bone disease at his back bone. He had a wife but had no any child because he was an invalid. He had two dogs namely oksen and okvom. He used to roam in the forest with his two dogs in order to collect edible things for the family. One day while he was roaming in the forest with his two dogs, he suddenly happened to fall down in a waterfall. Amazingly when he came out from the water, he observed that he was totally cured from the bone disease. He then became so happy. His clothes remained wet. But he concealed the whole matter and he preserved the wet clothes in a basket called "Tobong" for future use. He forbade his wife to touch the tobong strictly. This made the wife curious. One day when her husband went out to forest, she opened the tobong and found the wet clothes. Then she took out the wet clothes from the tobong and spread it over the dandal. As soon as the sun and the moon saw the wet clothes spreading over the dandal, they then rushed down and took the wet clothes. When Mairokelte saw the sun and the moon taking his wet clothes from his house, he got angry and sent his two dogs to chase them. But they were in vain. So Mairokelte cursed the sun and the moon saying, *"Nangni na rang rahuan a chuan khat om rase"*. The meaning of the curse which run as, "You the sun and the moon, you will be swallowed by my two dogs once in every year". So it is said that the solar aclipse and the lunar aclipse were occurred only due to the curse of Mairokelte. The sun was swallowed by the Oksen and the moon was swallowed by the Okvom.

Why are lightning and thundering occurred?

According to the traditional belief of the Ranglongs, there are three kinds of thunders – "Chekvom" which means black thunder, "Cheksen" which means red thunder and "Chekbual" which means brown thunder. They believed that the thunder is produced from the "Achir" which are springs in the forest having saline water. There is a saying –

"Chir vom ril anthok,
Cheka barai" – meaning the centre of the thunder is Achir.

Once there was a brother and a sister who used to go out for working in the jhum. It is customary in the Ranglong society for both males and females to go out of doors early in the morning for working in the jhum and return home in the evening. On their way back home, they used to take bath in the stream in a bare body. One day a brother saw his adolescent sister bathing in a stream in a bare body. The brother became impassioned to marry his sister. When the parents could not dissuade him, they gave their consent very unwillingly. The preparations were being made. The paddy was spread over a mattress for sun drying. An old woman was guarding the paddy from cocks, hens and birds. The birds were so frequently swooping down and swallowing paddy that the old woman became annoyed and shouted saying, "You the birds, do

not eat the paddy because it will be used at the marriage ceremony between the brother and the sister". Then the sister came to know the matter what was going on during so long days. She decided to leave for heaven. The she planted a tree called "Lethuang" and requested to grow straight upward. The tree listened to the request of the chaste girl. One day she climbed up the tree and sat on its head. She made a request to the tree for rapid growing by chanting this prayer –

"Lethuang pangsang,
Satarai dumdum,
Lao lethuang lao" – meaning "Let the tree of Lethuang be growing more and more"

So the tree was growing higher and higher and at last she took shelter in the sky. While leaving the tree for the sky, she broke its head so that nobody could climb up. This is why the head of the lethuang tree is broken. After entering in the sky, the sister turned into thunder and her brother turned into mentis which is called "Chekral". This is why; it is believed that wherever the mentis took shelter it is thundering there. And the lightning is nothing but her beautiful body casually seen while bathing in the sky.

KAIKUANGTEPA SIM

One day a man called Pengapa was sharpening his chem on the stone lying on the bank of a river. Suddenly a lobster pinched his testical painfully. Pengapa was in full rage and cut off a bending bamboo at the back. The bamboo flinged and hit the squirrel at his testicle. Provoked by the action of the bamboo, the squirrel bit off the cord of kha-um creeper. The cord of kha-um creeper fell down straight and struck the nest of phaivangs[1] below. Enraged phaivangs nipped a wild-bore at the belly. The wild-bore got angry and at once uprooted a nearby plaintain tree where a bat was having his daily snooze. The frightened bat flew away and entered into the ears of the elephant. Discomforted elephant run amuck and trampled down the house of an old woman called "Tarpitete". Tarpitete was so terrified and ran helter skelter and when she reached the fountain water supply of the king, being unable to control herself from nature's call any longer, she left her excrement near to it. She was caught by the people and brought her before the king. The villagers came together and surrounded her and called for an explanation saying, "Tarpitete, why do you leave your excrement near the fountain water supply of the king?" Tarpitete said, "Why does the elephant trample down my house?" Then the people asked the elephant saying, "You elephant, why do you trample down the house of Tarpitete?" The elephant said, "Why does the bat enter into my ears?" Then they asked the bat saying, "You bat, why do

you enter into the ears of the elephant?" The bat replied, "Why does the plaintain tree fall down disturbing me?" Then they asked the plaintain tree saying, "You plaintain tree, why do you fall down at all?" The plaintain tree said, "Can I fall down by myself?

It is the wild-bore who uprooted me". Then they asked the wild-bore saying, "You wild-bore, why do you uproot the plaintain tree?" The wild-bore said, "Why do the phaivangs nip my belly?" Then they asked the phaivangs saying, "You phaivangs, why do you nip the wild-bore particularly in his belly?" The phaivangs said, "Why does the kha-um creeper fall down on our nest?" Then they asked the kha-um creeper saying, "You kha-um creeper, why do you fall down on the nest of the phaivangs?" The kha-um creeper said, "Can I fall down of my own? It is only because the squirrel bit off my cord". Then they asked the squirrel saying, "You squirrel, why do you bit off the cord of kha-um creeper?" The squirrel said, "Why does the bamboo hit me particularly at my testicle?" Then they asked the bamboo saying, "You bamboo, why do you hit the squirrel at his testicle?" The bamboo said, "Why does Pengapa cut off me without least provocation?" Then they asked Pengapa saying, "Pengapa, why do you cut off the bamboo unnecessarily?" Pengapa shot back and said, "Why does the lobster pinch my testicle?" Then they caught the lobster and asked, "You lobster, why do you pinch the testicle of Pengapa?" The lobster was in a very awkward position and in trying to defend himself from death, the lobster said, "I was under the impression that I was inside my cave and so pinching all round". As he could not produce any satisfactory response to the angry people, then they tried to kill him. Before killing it, they asked the lobster on what condition and how he would be killed. To divert the attention of the angry people, the lobster said, "If you put me into the fire, I will become clear red and I like to be killed like that. I afraid to be thrown into the water with rice beer and I do not like to be killed in that way". The angry people thought that if he was thrown into the water with rice beer, then he would be surely killed. So they threw him into the water. As soon as he was thrown into the water, he made the angry people fool and entered into his cave safely. When the people came to know that they were cheated by the lobster, they became angry very much. Then they brought a "Nakhar" stick and poked into the cave for killing the lobster. When they withdrew the stick, they notised something like blood stained mark at the one end of it and thought that they had inflicted a grevious hurt to the lobster. Then they left the lobster into the cave and they all dispersed.

END NOTES

Phaivang is a kind of ant which has poison. It is of two kinds – red and black.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIANITY AND ACCULTURATION
(1925 – 2013)

ADVENT OF CHRISTIANITY

Common people are normally of the view that the Ranglongs got the Gospel of Jesus from the Mizo people from Mizoram. Now, naturally a question arises, how the Gospel of Jesus was preached to the Ranglong people. With regard to the emergence of Christianity in the Ranglong community, it was introduced to them by the different Christian denominations and at different times. To add this we must say that the Welsh Presbyterian Mission was the first to preach the Gospel to the Ranglong people by 1925. In 1943 the New Zealand Baptist Mission also felt the need to preach the Gospel to this tribe. As a result, they sent Rev. Jampuia of Tlaksih village of Jampui Hill to work among them. It was around in 1957 that the American Baptist Mid Mission also became involved in the evangelistic work and sent a Bengali pastor named Rev. Mihir Mallik to work among this tribe. A word should be said that around thirty years later from the emergence of Christianity in Mizoram, earlier known as Lushai Hills, the torch of Christianity was too lit in the Ranglong land in 1925. With the advent of the Christianity and acceptance of this new religion by the Ranglong people, the fundamental change has occurred in the shifting of life from migratory nature to peaceful permanent settlement.

HOW THE GOSPEL REACHED THE RANGLONGS OF MIZORAM

As was suggested earlier, the Welsh Presbyterian Mission was the first to preach the Gospel to the Ranglong land. Under the Moderatorship of Rev. Frederick Joseph Sandy, the first Annual Meeting of the Lushai – Cachar Welsh Presbyterian Church was held in Aizawl, earlier known as Aijal, during 29 – 31 January 1925 in which this decision was made through Resolution No.3: ***"The Ranglong Land near the Karimganj is attached to the Northern Circle, and they will be now under the control of the Assembly. In view of the urgency, the Standing Committee of the Assembly is entrusted to appoint evangelists who will work among the Ranglongs immediately. The salary of the evangelists whomever be appointed will be given from the fund of the tied fixed by the Committee".***[1] This was the first ever historic decision made by the Welsh Presbyterian Mission in its first annual meeting for landing the Gospel of Jesus to the land of the unknown and negligible tribe of the Ranglong.

Accordingly in the early part of 1925, Lalbuaia and Saizinga were appointed by the Standing Committee of the Assembly to work among the Ranglongs. In the same year these two evangelists set out their journey towards the Ranglong land with carrying their own luggages on the back in the midst of all the poor roadsrough ways of the jungle and the wild beasts to preach the Gospel to the people who had never heard the name of Jesus. They were the first Christian evangelists to bring the name of Jesus to the hearting of the Ranglongs. Before the arrival of these two evangelists in the Ranglong land in 1925, no other Christian Missions have ever worked among them. According to the decision adopted through Resolution No.10 in the second annual meeting of the Lushai–Cachar Welsh Presbyterian Church held on 14th–17th January 1926 at Durtlang, Lalbuaia and Saizinga were allowed to continue their evangelistic works for two years among the Ranglongs from Rengdil.[2]

The Lushai–Cachar Welsh Presbyterian Church in its 1938 annual meeting made the decision through Resolution No.18 to put Saizinga and Lalbuaia at Goboichhora and Borai villages respectively.[3] In 1939 Saizinga was transferred again through Resolution No.13 from Goboichhora to Muamchhora, but he spent at Goboichhora till the winter. But the annual meeting of 1940 through Resolution 8, Saizinga was finally transferred to Muamchhora.[4]

It is very difficult to come to a definite conclusion as to know who the first Christian was among the Ranglong community, and it is now a highly matter of controversy and speculation. Some say that sometime in the early part of 1925, two young boys namely Charuaingir and Lungdomoni alias Lalsuaka, and a young girl named Rualzomphut were baptized by Rev. Phawka at Goboichorra in Lushai Hills.[5] Along with them, some Chorai members namely Ngirthoi, Lianzoibum and Marlianlal were also baptized by Rev. Phawka.[6] However, there is no evidence to prove the fact owing to the absence of historical records. No reliable opinion is available in this regard. Of late, it is said that Charuaingir was rebaptized by Rev. Thawngphunga on 13th July 1963 in the river Langkai.[7] But in later times an old widow named Satihui of 65 years old, daughter of Mualmannang was baptized by Rev. Lalbuaia on 26th June 1945 at Goboichhora in Lushai Hills.[8] Since there onwards, it was observed that the Ranglongs were moving towards the Christianity. On 21st July 1946 a Ranglong boy named Simlaljoy of 16 years old, son of Charuaingir was baptized by Rev. Lalbuaia at Goboichhora.[9] A year later on 3rd July 1947 another boy named Ringparjoy of 18 years old, son of Zeichuangngir was baptized by Rev. Lalbuaia at Goboichhora.[10] As the number of church members were gradually growing, a separate Pastorate was constituted for the Ranglong Christians between the years 1934 to 1939.[11] But from 1940 the Ranglong Pastorate was dissolved for some time. It is not known, however, the reason why the Ranglong Pastorate was

dissolved at that time. However, the Ranglong Pastorate was reconstituted between the years 1948 and 1949.[12] From 1950 onwards it was completely dissolved and annexed to the neighbouring pastorate. In the Ranglong land right upto 1958, the progress of the Christianity among the Ranglong community was very slow, as their attitude towards the new religion was hostile. Those who got converted to the Christianity were persecuted by their clan or villagers. They were ex-communicated from the society and denied many facilities.

Lalbuaia was ordained as a pastor in 1944 and he continued his pastoral ministry among the Ranglong people untill his retirement in 1966.[13] He was probably born in 1896 and got married with Aikungi in 1919 with whom he had four children. As his first wife untimely deceased in 1930, leaving a baby child, Lalbuaia married again Laldawli and his second wife bore him nine children.[14] The first Christian missionary who brought the Gospel of Jesus to the Ranglong people in 1925, Lalbuaia died on 2nd January 1978.[15] On the ground of ill health, Saizinga, one of the first missionaries who made his appearance to the Ranglong people together with Lalbuaia in 1925, was sent to retirement from his evangelistic work by the Pastoral Committee Resolution 18 of 1943 annual meeting. He was given a pension salary of two rupees per month. But it was stopped by the Pastoral Committee Resolution No. 16 of 1946 annual meeting when Saizinga left the area of Rev. Zahlira and migrated to Reiek. From 1946 onwards nothing was known about him. However, in his later years, it is said that Saizinga left his mother Church and joined the United Penticostal Church.[16] To earmark 75 years of their Christianity, the Ranglongs of Mizoram had already celebrated the Platinum Jubillee on 26th December 2000 with good reason. Now they live there exactly like the Mizos of that area in all ways of life.

HOW THE GOSPEL REACHED THE RANGLONGS OF LONGAI VALLEY

In 1943 the New Zealand Baptist Mission also felt the need of preaching the Gospel to the Ranglong tribe. As a result, they sent Rev. Jampuia of Tlaksih village of Jampui Hill who had already acquired biblical knowledge from Churachanpur Bible School to work as a missionary pastor among the Ranglong tribe. He had his headquarters at Khawdungsei, a village on the bank of river Longai.[17] He moved about to every Ranglong village and did both pastoral and evangelistic works. Later in 1945, Rev. Jampuia was replaced by Thanseia of Khawdungsei. After he had worked for around ten years among the Ranglong people, Rev. Thanseia was retired due to ill health. He was then replaced by Rev. Thawngphunga of Hmunpui village of Jampui Hill. From the Jampui Christian Association, two more evangelists namely Robert Sangkunga of Sakhan Serhmun and Rokhuma of Biate, Mizoram were sent to do evangelistic work among the Ranglong tribe during 1956 to 1957. By the

same time the American Baptist Mid Mission also sent Rev. Mihir Mallik to the Ranglong land. Sometime in 1957, Darchungpar of Pipla village was baptized by Rev. Thawngphunga. But at the same time some suggest that Darchungpar was baptized in 1958. Huidirlal Tara and his friends were also baptized by Rev. Mihir Mallik in 1957.[18] Another view says that Huidirlal Tara was also baptized in 1958. Among the Ranglong tribe a good deal of Missionary work was done by the American Baptist Mid Mission with its centre at Makunda. Makunda Mission was established in 1951 by Rev. James Samuel Garlow from where they also carried both medical care and other social activities. The Baptist Mid missionaries used to visit the Ranglong villages of Longai valley very often and share the Gospel among them. They even sponsored some Ranglong students for their secular studies. Rev. Promode Malakar was posted at Nurka for preaching the Gospel.[19] It is interesting to note that two churches were already established one at Nurka village and another one at Pipla village in 1958.

The two Ranglong leaders namely Huidirlal Tara and Darilngul from Longai Valley of Assam were attended the annual meeting of the Jampui Baptist Association held at Hmawngchuan in 1963 to seek the possibility of joining the Tripura Baptist Christian Union. As the Cachar was under the control of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission for the church concerned, it could not be possible for the Ranglong Christians of the Longai Valley to join Tripura Baptist directly due to the Rules of Comity of the North–East India Churches Council. Therefore, at the request of Rev. G.H. Jones, the Ranglong Christians of Longai Valley were permited by Rev. Zairema, the then Cachar Officer to join the Tripura Baptist. Accordingly in the same year they could join the Tripura Baptist Christian Union. In 1963 the Tripura Baptist and the Baptist Mid Mission of Cachar were merged into one denomination and formed an association named "Assam and Tripura Ranglong Christian Association" with a view to getting improvement in the churches. The Ranglong Baptist Christians formed another association named "Halam Baptist Christian Association" which was separated from the Jampui Baptist Association on 21st January, 1978. The new association was installed by Rev. Lalhuala Darlong, the then General Secretary of the Tripura Baptist Christian Union on 21st January, 1978, at 12:30 pm at Nurka Baptist Church in Assam.[20] In view of the wider range of the church, the name of the association was replaced with the new name "Dharmanagar & Longai Baptist Association" by the annual meeting held on 24th – 26th November, 1978 at Laikhua.[21] Now the Ranglong Baptist Christians, sitting at Zoitang as its headquarters, are moving towards development in all spheres.

HOW THE GOSPEL REACHED THE RANGLONGS OF TRIPURA

When Rev. M.J. Eade and his wife got an appointment to enter in the

Ujayanta Palace to meet His Highness Maharaja Birbikram Kishore on 7th November 1938, the king told them not to have interference among the Halam and the Reangs. So for long times the Halams were not reached by the Gospel of Jesus.

During the years 1945 to 1950 some Ranglong students were studying their education at Birbikram Institute in Dharmanagar. They were staying in the Tribal Hostel with other tribal students. Among the other tribal students there were also three Lushai students namely Ngurzuala Sailo, his brother Sanglura Sailo and Laltuchhinga who were also studying their education in the same Institute. They were staying in the Tribal Hostel. The three Lushai boys became friendly with the Ranglong students and influenced them a lot as a genuine Christians and shared the Gospel of Jesus often with the Ranglong students. The Ranglong students were much impressed with the Gospel they heard from the three Lushai boys and wanted to know it more and more. Among the Ranglong students mention may be made of Sarat Mualzuiril Halam and Tamborlian Tara. In the course of time it came to happen that Sarat Mualzuiril Halam got baptised at the hand of Rev. Lalhuala Darlong at Darchawi village sometime in 1956.[22] Sarat Mualzuiril Halam was widely regarded as the first Ranglong Christian in Tripura. But at the same time Rev. Lalhuala Darlong clarified that Sarat Mualzuiril Halam was baptized sometime in 1958 at Darchawi.[23] At present it cannot be authoritatively mentioned the actual date of the early facts as there is no written evidence to prove. Sarat Mualzuiril Halam was regarded among the very first to profess Christianity among the Tripura Ranglongs. In May 1958, at the beginning of rainy season, Tamborlian Tara and some other Ranglongs were baptised by Rev. Thawngphunga at Bagbasa village. It is said that Rev. Thawngphunga was accompanied by Lalchunglura and Nurualbum Chorai to witness the programme when Tamborlian Tara other Ranglong were baptized. In the same year, another band led by Neiluaril Ranglong were also embraced the Christianity. Very soon there was paid evangelist who devoted their whole time for evangelism. Every early believer became an evangelist to propagate the Gospel of Jesus to their neighbours. Ignoring the endless serious of troubles caused to them by their next to door relatives, the early Ranglong Christians were enthusiastically propagated the Gospel of Jesus all the time.

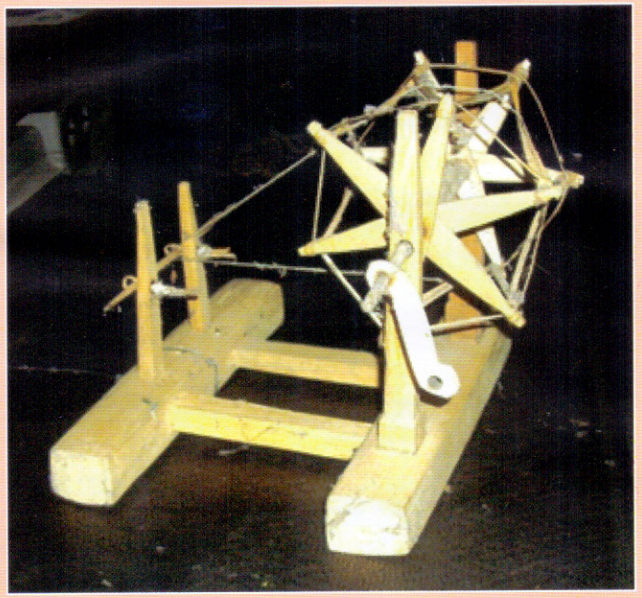
THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE RANGLONG LAND

Right from 1958 onwards, it was observed that the Ranglongs were moving towards the Christianity. It is said that in the early part of 1959 a little bamboo hut was used for the purpose of church at Tivalian, a little hamlet where only six families existed. Rev. Gordon H. Jones, popularly known as Jon Sap, was invited by the early Ranglong Christians led by Tamborlian Tara to open the church.[24] As a result, the first church came into being in the

Ranglong land. While some were of opinion that the first church in the Ranglong land was erected at Vomthat village.[25] At present there is no village left out without a church building. The first concrete building church was erected at Noagang in Tripura in the year 1984. In 1959, the early Christians were gathered together at Tivalian village and celebrated the first Christmas festival in the Ranglong land. The next year in 1960, the Christmas was celebrated in the same way at Bagbasa with all the early Christians. By 1964 the number of the Ranglong Christians reached to 288 whereas the figure rose to 544 in 1969.[26] Ever since they embraced Christianity, the Ranglongs took seriously of the Gospel through which they were liberated from the bondage of many evil practices, and from the curse of illiteracy. Thus Christianity was a prime mover initiating modern changes among the Ranglongs. It is not out of place here to mention that the Christianity did not uproot the people from their traditional moorings. They were treated with respect. Gradually, the local people were trained to take up the role of religious functionaries.

At that time the main emphasis was on making self supporting church. As a result, a dedicated man from Assam named Simlalchuang was sent to the Eastern Theological College at Jorhat in Assam to have his theological training during 1977 – 1981. After completing his graduation successfully, he was then installed as a probationary pastor on 1th September 1981. At the Annual Meeting of Tripura Baptist Christian Union held on 17th February, 1985 at Deora Baptist Church, after he had completed his long five years probationary period Simlalchuang was ordained as to be the first pastor among the Ranglong tribe. With the ordination of Rev. Simlalchuang the Ranglong people were naturally jubilant. Simlalchuang was born in the village of Nurka, in the district of Karimganj, on 9th January, 1950. He was by birth a Hindu, belonging to Mualphei Vai of the Ranglong clan order. On 2th January, 1967, at the age of around 17 he profess Christianity and got baptized at the hand of Rev. Thawngphunga at Balia Baptist Church at Nurka in Assam. On 24th June, 1985 Rev. Simlalchuang was migrated to Zoitang in Tripura and there he soon began his pastoral ministry in right earnest. The religious scriptures and holy books, regulating the daily life of the people, were translated in their dialect. It was only in 1978 that the devotional hymn book was translated by a group of early Ranglong Christians led by Huidirlal Tara in their dialect and released by the Tripura Baptist Christian Union in the same year. The Bible translation work had been started in 1987 by Rev. Simlalchuang who was appointed as the Chief Translator of the Ranglong Bible by the Bibles International, Michigan, USA during the long lapse of years from 1987 to 2007. The first workshop of the Ranglong Bible translation was held on 3rd March 1987 at Deodars Spiritual Life Centre, Mussoorie. At long last prolonged prayer of the Ranglong people for having the Bible of their own dialect saw its fulfillment on 2nd February 2003 when the first ever

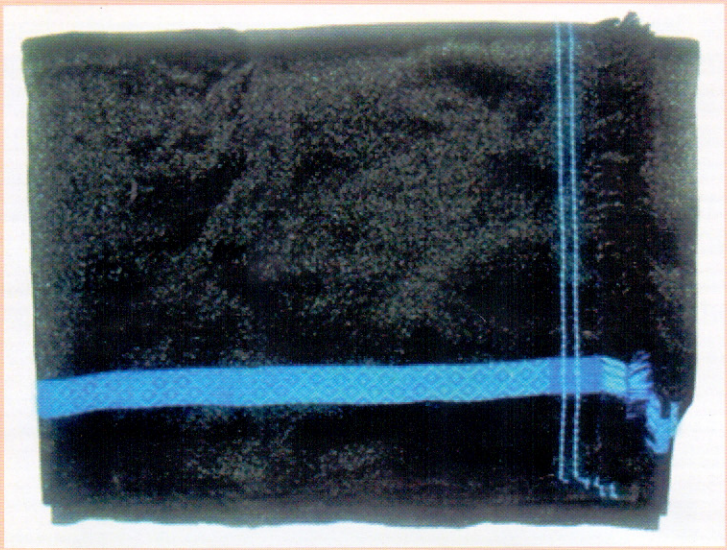
SUMPUK & SAREL – For husking corn



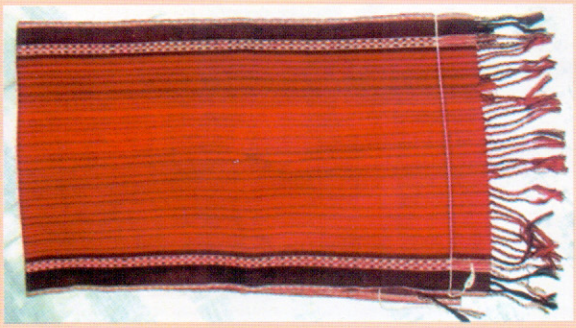
RAMUI – For producing yarn

TI-UM – Gourd bottle, an indigenous water container

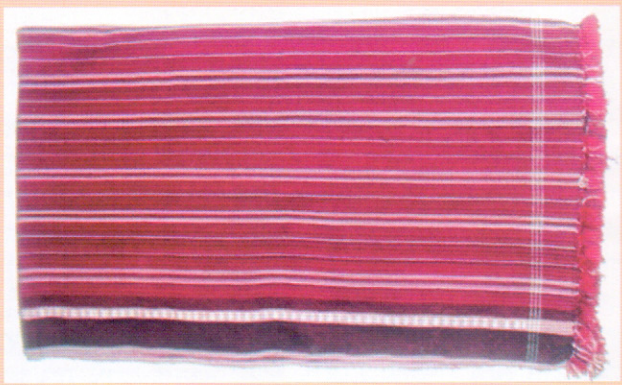
CHEMPAI – Used by male



RANGLONG FEMALE CULTURAL DRESS – NIKNI AMDUM



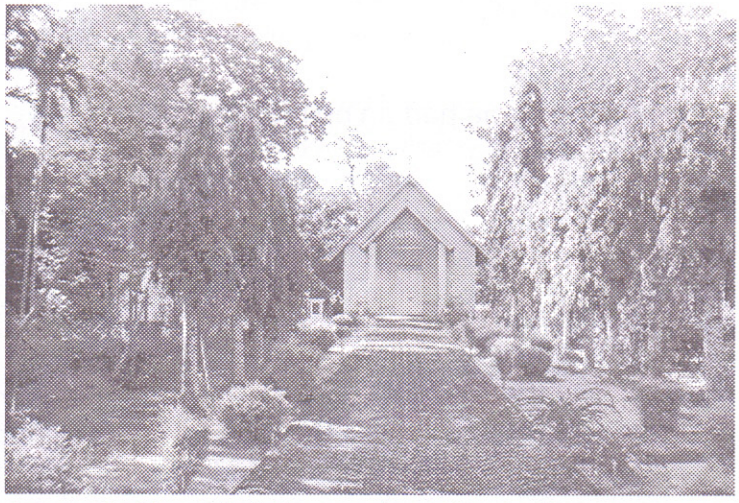
RANGLONG FEMALE CULTURAL DRESS – RISA



RANGLONG CULTURAL – ZANI

Ranglong New Testament was released at Zairaal village in Assam. Rev. Simlalchuang died on 18th April 2011. For the Ranglong people, it seemed as if a dear personal friend had been taken from them. His name will be always remembered with gratitude for his selfless sacrifice he rendered to his people throughout his life. The Bible Society of India also adopted the work of the Bible translation in Ranglong dialect in 2001. As a result, the first workshop of the Ranglong Bible translation was held on 22th – 25th March 2001 at Shillong in India. For commemoration of the Gospel Golden Jubilee of the Ranglong Christians, the Ranglong New Testament with Psalm of BSI Version was released on 26th – 29th December 2008 at Noagang in Tripura.

The activities of the church were not merely confined to conversion and education. It also carried both medical care and social activities. Significant numerical progress began among the Ranglong tribe by 1970. From then onwards the Church grew rapidly. At this more than 95% of the total population of the Ranglongs haved embraced Christianity. The rest 05% are still following the ancient and rituals of their forefathers. The 75th anniversary of the advent of the Good News of Jesus was celebrated by the Ranglongs of Mizoram on 26th December 2000 at Luimawi, earlier known as Moroichhora, in Mizoram, whereas the Ranglongs of Tripura and Assam also had celebrated the Gospel Golden Jubillee during the whole month of December 2008 at various places in Tripura and Assam with good reason. It is worth to be mentioned that the spread of the Christianity among the Ranglong society has not created any sense or feeling of isolation between the Christians and the Hindus so far related to socio-cultural activities, except matters relating to religious beliefs. But among the Ranglongs, there as many as five Christian denominations came into existence, some Baptist Church, some Catholic Church, some Presbyterian Church, some Evangelical



The first concrete Church building constructed in the Ranglong area in 1984

DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS IN THE RANGLONG LAND

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

As was stated earlier, the Welsh Presbyterian Church was the first to preach the Gospel to the Ranglong land in the early part of 1925. Therefore, the beginning of the Presbyterian Church among the Ranglong community may be dated from about 1925. To earmark 75 years of their Christianity in the Presbyterian Church, the Ranglong Christians of Mizoram had already celebrated the Platinum Jubillee on 26th December 2000 with good reason. Now they live there exactly like the Mizos of that area in all ways of life. Since the Welsh Presbyterian Mission finally left Mizoram in 1968 under the condition given by the Union Government of India, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church took over the charge of the mission works to continue where the Welsh Presbyterian Mission left off. Accordingly in the early part of 1972, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church started its evangelistic works among the Ranglong community in Assam. At the beginning the church was much slow in progress in Assam. But in the course of time the church was eventually growing larger and larger. After Mizoram and Assam Ranglong the next Ranglong among whom evangelistic works initiated was the Tripura Ranglong. The Presbyterian Church laid its foundation among the Tripura Ranglong at Noagang on 11th January 1976. A word should be added here that the decision for formation of the Tripura Presbyterian Church was made on 11th November 1975. It was just at this time that the nine churches – Noagang, Balukchhora, Joitang, Gontachhora, Longthung, Nalichhora, Polkhua, Raipasa and Sontang joined the newly established church in Tripura.

According to the decision made by the annual meeting of the Tripura Presbyterian Church held on 4th – 6th November 1977 at Tuicholong in South Tripura, the Dharmanagar Pastorate was constituted for the early Ranglong Presbyterian Christians.[27]

On the other hand some had an opinion that before November 1977, the Dharmanagar pastorate was already existed and the office bearers were also formed on 17th March 1977.[28] No satisfactory conclusion can be made in this regard as no any reliable evidence is available. The first Standing Committee of the Dharmanagar pastorate was held on 30th April 1978 at 11:00 am at the Noagang Presbyterian Church.[29] From 1984 the name of the pastorate was changed from Dharmanagar to Noagang Pastorate which is still in use. At present the Presbyterian Church is concentrating most of the Ranglong villages in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura. Presbyterian Church is among the very first to preach the Gospel of Jesus to the Ranglong people.

The Ranglong Presbyterian Church and the Tripura Presbyterian Church are so closely connected that one cannot consider them separately. Perhaps a few lines of passage should be added here about the history of the

Tripura Presbyterian Church. In 1971 three missionaries came from Mizoram and started their evangelistic works in Tripura under the umbrella of the Tripura Baptist Christian Union. From there onwards the number of missionaries from Mizoram was gradually increased to continue the evangelistic works in Tripura. However, towards the end of 1975 certain difficulties were beginning to appear among the missionaries who came from Mizoram and the leaders of the Tripura Baptist Church. The conflicts among the leaders were growing more serious and caused much trouble and later resulted to establish the Presbyterian Church as an autonomous denominational organization. A word should be added here that the first meeting was held on 11th November, 1975 in which the decision for formation of the Tripura Presbyterian Church was made with the following nine churches – Noagang, Balukchhora, Joitang, Gontachhora, Longthung, Nalichhora, Polkhua, Raipasa and Sontang. Another meeting was held on 18th December, 1975, Thursday at 07:15pm at Raipasa. On 7th January, 1976 they met again at Raipasa where Rev. Lalchunglura, the pastor who left the Baptist church, also participated the meeting and made a decision to hold the first Presbytery meeting of the Tripura Presbyterian Church.[28] Accordingly the first Presbytery meeting was held on 9th – 11th January, 1976 at Gontachhora with 18 delegates and 4 visitors only.[30] The year 1976 saw the formal formation of the Tripura Presbyterian Church. Although in the year 1975 the Tripura Presbyterian Church was formed in Tripura, it was not very effective at that time. It would be interesting at this point to mention that Gusai Bokto Koloy was baptized by Rev. Lalchunglura on 11th January, 1976.[31] As Gosai Bokto Koloy who was widely regarded as the first Christian baptized according to the doctrine and ritual of the Presbyterian Church on 11th January, 1976, so the Presbytery Standing Committee through Resolution No. 6th held on 6th October, 2000 made 11th January, significantly as the Raising Day of the Church. The Presbytery Meeting was held again on 14th – 16th May, 1976 at Gontachhora which was regarded as the first formal Presbytery Meeting after the Tripura Presbyterian Church had been formed. Soon after its inception, Ringchunmanik Ranglong and his wife Neiluazon Ranglong of Noagang village donated their land, which was more than 10 acres, to the Tripura Presbyterian Church for the establishment of its headquarters. The land was cleared up by 12 early Christians led by Manikzoi Ranglong on 21st October, 1977 with corporate labour.[32] The 12 early Christians were of different villages such as from Zoitang – 3 members, Tisakhua – 1 member, Seisimdung – 3 members and Noagang – 05 members who worked enthusiastically on that day. On 28th April, 1978 they started making house in the Mission Compound[33] and Noagang was used as the headquarters of the Church for around 30 years. As the operational area of the church is larger and larger, the headquarters was shifted from Noagang to Agartala in 2008. After a long decadal period of struggled with various

difficulties which often cropped up the church since its inception, later the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod made a decision to undertake all the mission works of the Tripura Presbyterian Church in its 1985 annual meeting.

Accordingly, from 1986 the Tripura Presbyterian Church was then fully undertaken by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod and in the middle part of 1986 two senior pastors namely Rev. Thangdela and Rev. S.Lalmuana were sent to Tripura. Rev. Thangdela was inducted as the first Field Secretary of the Tripura Presbyterian Church by Rev. Robawiha, the then Modeartor of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod on 20th July, 1986 at the Noagang Presbyterian Church. Rev. S. Lalmuana was posted at Tuidu. From then onwards the Tripura Presbyterian Church grew rapidly. At present the Tripura Presbyterian Church is running two High Schools and four Senior Basic Schools, several dispensaries and craft Centres in the different parts of the state.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

The earliest Christian contacts with North East India were made by Roman Catholic missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries. Although the Roman Catholic church was the first to preach the Gospel of Jesus in North East India, but it set foot on the soil of Ranglong quite later. Among the Ranglong community its beginning may be dated from 1982. During the years between 1980 and 1982 when the Roman Catholic has played a particularly important role in providing humanitarian service in the tribal areas, the early Ranglong Christians of Assam were very much eager to know whether it could be possible to carry the humanitarian service among the Ranglong community. As a result they were trying to keep contact with the Catholic Father who was staying at Burunga in the Karimganj district of Assam. Meanwhile some early Ranglong Christians led by Simlalbul and Lalhuingir went to Burunga sometime in the month of May 1980 to meet the Catholic Father. They could of course meet Rev. Fr. Mathew Ullattil, CSC, popularly known as Father Mathew, and had a prolong discussion with him. Father Mathew assured them to visit their village very soon. But as time passed, he could visit their village only after the lapse of a year in the month of August 1981. It is said that Father Mathew made his second visit to Nurka village in the month of November 1981 and had a meeting with the villagers. The villagers were much impressed with the activities of the Roman Catholic and decided to establish the Roman Catholic Church in the Ranglong land. Of late in the month of February 1982 a cowshed belonged to someone was used for the purpose of church. It is not out of place to mention here that this cowshed was regarded as the first Catholic Church established in the Ranglong land. Rev. Fr. Mathew Ullattil, CSC was among the very first to serve the Lord among the Ranglong community. He was born on 30th November, 1939 at Neyyassery in Kerala. He was ordained to attain priesthood on 23rd December, 1968. Fr. Mathew died on 23rd February,

2011 at the age of 72. Sometime in 1982, the Catholic Church was established in the Ranglong area of Tripura. A newly Parish in the Ranglong area was opened at Bagbasa on 25 March 2012. Rev. Fr. Paul Chooracka1 R., C.S.C., B.A.; B.Ph.; B.Th.; B.Ed. is putting as the first Parish Father of Bagbasa Parish. He was born on 19th May, 1972 at Nalukettu, in the district of Koratty Via Trichur in Kerala. He was ordained to attain priesthood on 3rd January, 2003. At present the Ranglong Catholic Church is growing rapidly. The Catholic Church is now operating three high schools in the Ranglong concentrated areas. Now there are also nuns among the Ranglong community who dedicated their whole life for the service of the Lord.

EVANGELICAL ASSEMBLY CHURCH (EAC)

The Evangelical Assembly Church primarily came from Manipur. Some missionaries were sent to work in Tripura. Apparently this Church was at first working under the umbrella of the Tripura Baptist Christian Union on partnership agreement. But in the early part of 1997, certain conflicts were beginning to appear within the Baptist Church in Tripura which caused much trouble later.

Six months later in June 1997, the conflicts were more serious and lastly led to establish the first Evangelical Assembly Church in the Ranglong area. Although the church is small in relation to population, it is still steadily moving towards progress.

INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF INDIA (ICI)

The Independent Church of India is originally from Manipur. In Manipur, its sitting place as headquarters is Sielmet in the district of Churachandpur. The Independent Church of India started its work in Tripura through partnership agreement with the Tripura Baptist Christian Union. During the first ten years from 1975 – 1984, the church initiated its work through financial assistance for supporting three native evangelists to work under the Baptist Church. But from 1984 missionaries were sent from Manipur and started working among the Debbarma community. From 1988 the church was separated from the Tripura Baptist Church and iniated its mission works in Tripura as an autonomous denominational organization. The Independent Church of India set foot on the soil of the Ranglongs on 25th April,1995 when for the first time the church put an evangelist at Thumsip village in Tripura. Rev. Lianhnun was putting at Zarollian village on 24th May, 1999 as the Field Superintendent of North Tripura & Karimganj Mission Field. Right from 1999 the church settled at Zarollian village permanently and continued its evangelistic works in different places. Rev. Lianhnun was the first pastor of the ICI church who worked among the Ranglongs during the years 1999 – 2006. He will be always remembered with gratitude for his

untiring efforts to bring the project of World Vision in the Ranglong land. Despite its scanty population, the church is steadily moving towards development.

REFORM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (RPC)

The Evangelical Assembly Church was brought from Manipur. Its headquarters is located at Lamka in the district of Churachandpur in Manipur. In 2004 when the Evangelical Assembly Church segmented into two autonomous denominational organizations, many of the Ranglong Christians joined the newly established Reform Presbyterian Church from the Evangelical Assembly Church. Mention may be made that the Reform Presbyterian Church was first ever established in the Ranglong land sometime in 2004. From January 2008 the church opened an English school named Covenant English Medium School at Bagbasa

EDUCATION

Education is a liberating voice that brings forth progress for the individual as well as the society. Education is comprehensive in nature. It is not limited to only academic activities but aims at the holistic development of an individual. In the past, education was the privilege of only the rich and elite. Later on the tribal people also have to be sought out and provided with education. When the tribals fail to seek the educational advantage, the degree of modernity, mobility and diversification of occupations among them is sharply reduced.

In educational aspect, the Ranglong society was much lacking behind. When the missionaries brought the Gospel of Jesus and set foot on the Ranglong soil, the socio-economic position of the Ranglong community was too worse. They were primitive, poor and totally illiterate. But the missionaries were from a very early period interested in education. Right from the initial stage when the Welsh Presbyterian Mission initiated its evangelistic works among the Ranglong community, the pioneering missionaries gave greater educational preference which was extensively needed to them.

On 13th – 15th January, 1928 when the annual meeting of the Lushai–Cachar Welsh Presbyterian Church was held under the Moderatorship of Rev. J.M. Harries Rees, a decision was made through the Resolution No. 17 to send a teacher having a good capability of english to the Ranglong land.[33] Accordingly a school teacher named Sentea who belonged to Lushai clan was sent to the Goboichhora village.[35] Perhaps it could be said without any hesitation that it was among the very first ever school opened in the Ranglong land. Thus Christianity was not merely confined to conversion, but the pioneering missionaries gave greater educational preference which was badly needed to this tribe. Right from 1976, the ardent Ranglong

Christians were much impressed with the object of setting up an ideal school in the Ranglong land. Mention may be made the name of Neiluaril Ranglong who among the ardent Christians was so zealous for education. On 12 August 1977, with a view to making education relevant to the needs of the poor community, when an institution named Bethlehem English School was opened at Noagang in Tripura. At the beginning as there was no any school house to start with, the search for a school house began soon. To the surprise of everyone, Lianzamchuang Ranglong, a keen devotee of education but not a Christian, readily offered his cow-shed for the purpose of school. The school was then run in that cow-shed and, perhaps it was so named as Bethlehem English School because of its humble beginning from the cow-shed. Gradually the school was progressing and up graded year after year. In 2001 the school was recognized by the Government of Tripura as full fledged high school and was affiliated to Tripura Board of Secondary Education. It is not out of place here to mention that this school is the first ever high school in the Ranglong area. With the opening of this school, the church has played an outstanding role in spreading education. Since the inception of this institution, a good number of well qualified leaders were produced in the society. From a humble beginning in 1977, it is today one of the high schools in the state having remarkable success in the Madhyamik examination every year. And with the blessing of the Government of Tripura in providing funds for the tribal hostellers, the school is now running hostels for boys and girls.

Sometime in around 1945 a school was established by the Royal Government of Tripura at Thangnang village. But later it was shifted to the Lalchhera village where till today the school remained standing with its first name as "Thangnangbari Primary School". During the years 1950 – 1980 there were only few primary schools existed in the Ranglong concentrated area in Tripura. Today, the Government of Tripura is playing an important role in the field of education to eradicate the curse of illiteracy from the society. Now there are at least eight high schools and several senior and junior basic schools existing in the Ranglong area from where the students are getting their education. Education is the sole vehicle of changing the Ranglong society matters relating to life style, cooking system, food items, pattern of house building, personal hygiene and community health awareness, etc.

The first High School in the Ranglong land established on 12 August 1977

IMPACT OF ACCULTURATION

No society can be totally static or isolated for long periods of time. Acculturation means transmission of cultural elements from one social group to another. Changes in a given culture may come about from its internal dynamics, such as revolutions or upheavals, or from contact with other cultures. The coming into contact of two or more cultures generally leads to changes, in different measures, in the interacting cultures. Quite often, cultural traits and patterns spread from the important centres of civilization to the smaller regions.

Diffusion on the other hand, refers to the spread of cultural traits and patterns from major centres of civilization to smaller cultures and occasionally the other way round. Acculturation and diffusion involve one another. Education is a strong factor in acculturation as it influences the community through the ideas and motivation that are transmitted. Acculturation does not take place over night. It takes a long time before the members borrow the culturatriats from other communities. It is a universal and continuous process, which takes place over a period of time. But the time taken for acculturation is definitely shorter than the time taken for assimilation. So in comparison to assimilation, acculturation consumes relatively less time. Acculturation is the process through which the Ranglong society is usually transformed or modified. New ideas, which have been acquired through contact and communication, the desire and need of new traits and thoughts and respect for those, who bring in the new ideology have been accommodated in the Ranglong culture. As a result, through the emergence of Christianity, new beliefs, ideas, manners, customs, norms, values, fashions and style of living have become a part of the Ranglong culture now. As the Buddhist thoughts and ideology has spread from India to China and Japan, the ideologies of the Hebrews has spread to the west and brought to the north eastern people over a hundred years back.

In the field of agriculture, the Ranglongs are now gradually giving up the primitive way of cultivation and adopted the new method which is relatively profitable. They are now changing their migratory nature and started permanent settlements. Like the other neighbouring tribes they also now turned to some modernisation of agricultural practices like wet rice cultivation, horticulture and sericulture. For the purpose of wet rice cultivation, they are now rearing animals for ploughing the field. In the field of education, the Christian missionaries had pioneering contribution in modern education. At the beginning the missionaries had started informal schools in the villages. On 12th August, 1977, with a view to making education relevant to the needs of the poor community, the first ever English medium school named Bethlehem English School was opened at Noagang. Thus the system of modern education emerged in the Ranglong area along with the emergence of the Christianity. Today, the Government of Tripura is also giving importance

to education. There are not less than 8 high schools, 5 senior basic schools and several primary schools in the Ranglong area from where they get their education. Now education is the sole vehicle of changing the Ranglong society matters relating to life style, cooking system, food items, pattern of house building, personal hygiene and community health awareness, etc. Now the Government of Tripura is concentrating the Ranglong area with special care and attention. Almost all the villages of the Ranglong area had already been electrified and there are good roads in all the villages. Within a short distance of 5 to 7 kilometers only, a high school and medical centre is now available even in a hilly areas. On the other hand, in the process of change and modernization the rich traditional culture of the Ranglongs is rapidly disappearing. If there is no conservative nature and efforts to preserve the rich cultural heritage, it will be completely lost and disappeared which was handed down from generation to generation. In fact there had been a welcome trend to revive their culture in recent years. Some eminent Ranglong leaders have been taking the initiative to encourage the Ranglong culture to revive and safe guard their cultural heritage.

There has been a sense of a new awakening to preserve and propagate their poems, indigenous songs, tales and stories in their own language. It should be our endeavour to bring the best things of the modern world to this tribe in such a way that they will not destroy the traditional life, but will activate and develop all that is good in them.

END NOTES

1. Remthanga, Rev. H.: *Synod Thurel Lakkhawm, Vol. I(1910 – 1950)*, p. 126
2. Ibid. p. 126
3. Ibid. p. 146
4. Ibid. p. 127
5. *Sultang*: Golden Jubillee Souvenir, p. 51
6. Ibid. p. 51
7. According to the statement of his son Simlalmanik, Charuaingir was baptized again after he migrated to Nurka village in Assam.
8. As per record found in the baptismal register in the Synod Archive, Aizawl in Mizoram.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. *Presbyterian Hand Book 1994*: P. 159
12. Ibid.
13. Gospel Centenary(1894 – 1994): Souvenir, p. 41
14. *Sultang*: op. cit., p. 51
15. Gospel Centenary(1894 – 1994): op. cit., p. 41

16. Lalauva, R. : *Mizoram Kohhran 13 Chanchin*, p. 47
17. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : op. cit., p. 28
18. *Sultang*: op. cit., p. 19
19. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : op. cit., p. 30
20. Sultang: op. cit., p. 42
21. Ibid. 42
22. Ibid. 26
23. Rev. Lalhuala Darlong clarified on 17 August 2008, Sunday at Laikhua that he baptized Sarat Mualzuiril sometime in 1958 at Darchawi.
24. *Sultang*: op. cit., p. 26
25. *Golden Jubilee Souvenir(1938-1988)*: TBCU, Agartala, p. 73
26. *Sultang*: op.cit., p. 27
27. Chawngmunrai, Rev. : *Tripura Presbyterian Church History(1975 – 2000)*, p. 18
28. It is found in the minute register, unpublished manuscript of 1977.
29. Zorammawia, Rev. C. : *Tripura Presbyterian Church History(1911 – 2012)*, p. 140
30. It is found in the minute register, unpublished manuscript of 1976.
31. Zorammawia, Rev. C. : op. cit., p. 141
32. *Sultang*: op.cit., p. 33
33. Ibid. p.33
34. Remthanga, Rev. H. : op. cit., p. 126
35. Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram : op. cit., p. 28

CHAPTER XI

RANGLONG YOUTH ASSOCIATION

On Thursday, 22nd December 1994, a very small number of delegates from Mizoram and Tripura met at Noagang in Tripura and agreed to form an effective organization named "**RANGLONG YOUTH ASSOCIATION**", popularly known as RYA, with the purpose of promoting unity among the youth and in extending voluntary service to the society. An Adhoc Committee was formed in which Thomas Halam was appointed as the Chairman Pro tem. Few days later, the first general meeting was held on Thursday, 29 December 1994 in the hall of the Presbyterian Church at Noagang in Tripura. It was attended by a very big number of delegates from Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.[1] Election was held and the honour of being the first ever RYA President belonged to Thomas Halam of Noagang. Since then this body went on to play a pivotal role in the society for the implementation of variety of socio-cultural activities through collective efforts. The Ranglong Youth Association is now gradually gaining ground among the society through the selfless efforts exerted by the pioneering leaders. The Ranglong Youth Association is registered under the Society Registration Act, 1860 in Tripura with the Registration No. 5961/10. It is a Non Political and Non Religious organization.

The following were the first Office Bearers of the Association:

President	: Thomas Halam 1994 – 1999 Founder President 2000 – 2001 Treasurer 2002 – 2009 President 2010 – 2011 Finance Secretary
Vice President	: Ringlalman Tara 1994 – 1999
General Secretary	: Ditluamoni Halam 1994 – 1999
Assistant General Secretary	: Reuben Ranglong 1994 – 1999 2010 – 2011 President 2012 – 2013 Vice President

Treasurer : Zeingakmanik Ranglong
1994 – 1999 Treasurer
2000 – 2001 Finance Secretary
2002 – 2009 Vice President
2010 – 2011 Treasurer

THE VENUES OF THE CONFERENCE

Since the inception of the RYA, conference is held once in a year in different Ranglong concentrated villages. So far the following places were the venues of the conference held once in a year:

YEAR	VILLAGE
1994	Noagang, Tripura
1995	Noagang, Tripura
1996	Noagang, Tripura
1997	Conference was not held
1998	Noagang, Tripura
1999	Conference was not held
2000	Zairaal, Assam
2001	Zoitang, Tripura
2002	Noagang, Tripura
2003	Noagang, Tripura
2004	Jukichhera, Assam
2005	Rothabil, Tripura
2006	Seisimdung, Tripura
2007	Kaisanari, Assam
2008	Vomthat, Tripura
2009	Conference was not held
2010	Langkhanphong, Assam
2011	Joynagar, Tripura
2012	Pipla, Assam
2013	Noagang, Tripura
2013	Vomthat, Tripura
2014	Conference was not held

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1. It is collected from the minute register of the Ranglong Youth Association.

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4) Donzarlian, Age 80, Saithah
5) Ditluaram, Age 76, Laikhua
6) Huilianring Tara, Age 102, Pipla, Assam
7) Karbarchim Vai, Age 78, Noagang
8) Johormoni Langkai, Age 57, Noagang
9) Josua Sobotmoni Achep, Age 53, Noagang

10) Kormo Molsom, Age 56, Noagang
11) Korsinglian Vai, Age 75, Saithah
12) Korsingchun Tansurai, Age 62, Noagang
13) Lianzamphut, Age 86, Noagang
14) Lianmunlian Banmaher, Age 80, Vomthat
15) Lianzarlal Rupini, Age 95, Vomtha
16) Manikjoy Vai, Age 82 (1932 – 2013), Noagang
17) Manikmoni Vai, Age 78, Zarollian
18) Marbuangring, Age 70, Laikhua
19) Mualtangrai Vai, Age 70, Zarollian
20) Mualkhumthang Banmaher, Age 85, Zarollian
21) Namkunga Darlong, Age 43, Boitang
22) Neiazom Achep, Age 60, Zoitang
23) Neitungril Tara, Age 76, Zoitang
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25) Rev. Tamborlian Tara, Age 80, Bagbasa
26) Ringdonlian Rupini, Age 86, Noagang
27) Ringphutmoni Tara, Age 75, Laikhua
28) Sorpialthang Tivol, Age 75, Zoitang
29) Sumdonril Tansurai, Age 90, Laikhua
30) Sumtialngir, Age 78, Laikhua
31) Torkhamthang, Age 68, Zarollian
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ISBN : 978-81-927167-0-1